MINERVA

ARCHAEOLOGY & ANCIENT ART

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

QUEENS OF THE NILE

Royal wives and goddesses

HERCULANEUM

A grand Roman house trapped in time

CAPITAL LOSSES

Transformation at the heart of the Inca empire

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At the start of the 20th century, a team of archaeologists from Turin made an important discovery in Egypt: the tomb of queen Nefertari. Nefertari was renowned, and her prominence hinted by the many inscriptions that bear her name, but the scale of the tomb the archaeologists found impressed nonetheless. Finds from Ernesto Schiaparelli's excavations in the Valley of the Queens and the artisan village of Deir el-Medina are now on view in a new exhibition at the Kimbell Art Museum. For our cover feature, we take a look at the archaeology of this remarkable royal woman and the people who built her tomb.

The year 2020 has seen museums, galleries, and sites in many parts of world close and reopen. When the House of the Bicentenary in Herculaneum reopened its doors in 2019, it had been off-limits for some 30 years. The Roman townhouse, one of the site's grandest, was excavated and opened up by another Italian archaeologist, Amedeo Maiuri, in 1938, before closing in 1983 due to structural issues. The lack of regular maintenance that came with the closure didn't help matters, but recent conservation work means visitors can enjoy the splendours of this spectacular house once more, as Francesco Sirano and Leslie Rainer write.

In Peru, Inca royalty ruled their vast empire from its sacred centre, Cuzco. Cuzco was the centre of the world, a world divided into four parts. This worldview, as Michael J Schreffler explains, is reflected in the rich material culture left behind across the Inca empire. When the Spanish conquered this city, though, it lost its position as the centre of an almighty empire, but traces of the impressive Inca structures still stand in modern Cuzco today.

A four-part system was also important to the Etruscans, inhabitants of ancient Italy. They divided the sky into four (and then 16) regions to help determine the will of the gods through divination. An exhibition at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples explores southern Italy's connections to the Etruscans. Paolo Giulierini, the museum's director, takes us into these ancient Etruscan borderlands, fertile fields fought over by Greeks and Etruscans, but a land of coexistence and cultural exchange as much as conflict.

The Etruscans were by no means the only people to look for guidance from higher powers. As David Stuttard writes, the ancient Greeks sought out oracles to commune with the sage spirits of the deceased. In our final feature, we examine ancient attitudes towards and beliefs about the dead, revealed through myth and material culture.

I hope you enjoy the latest issue, and have a happy and healthy New Year.

Lucia Marchini
Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

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PHOTO: Aaron Gang

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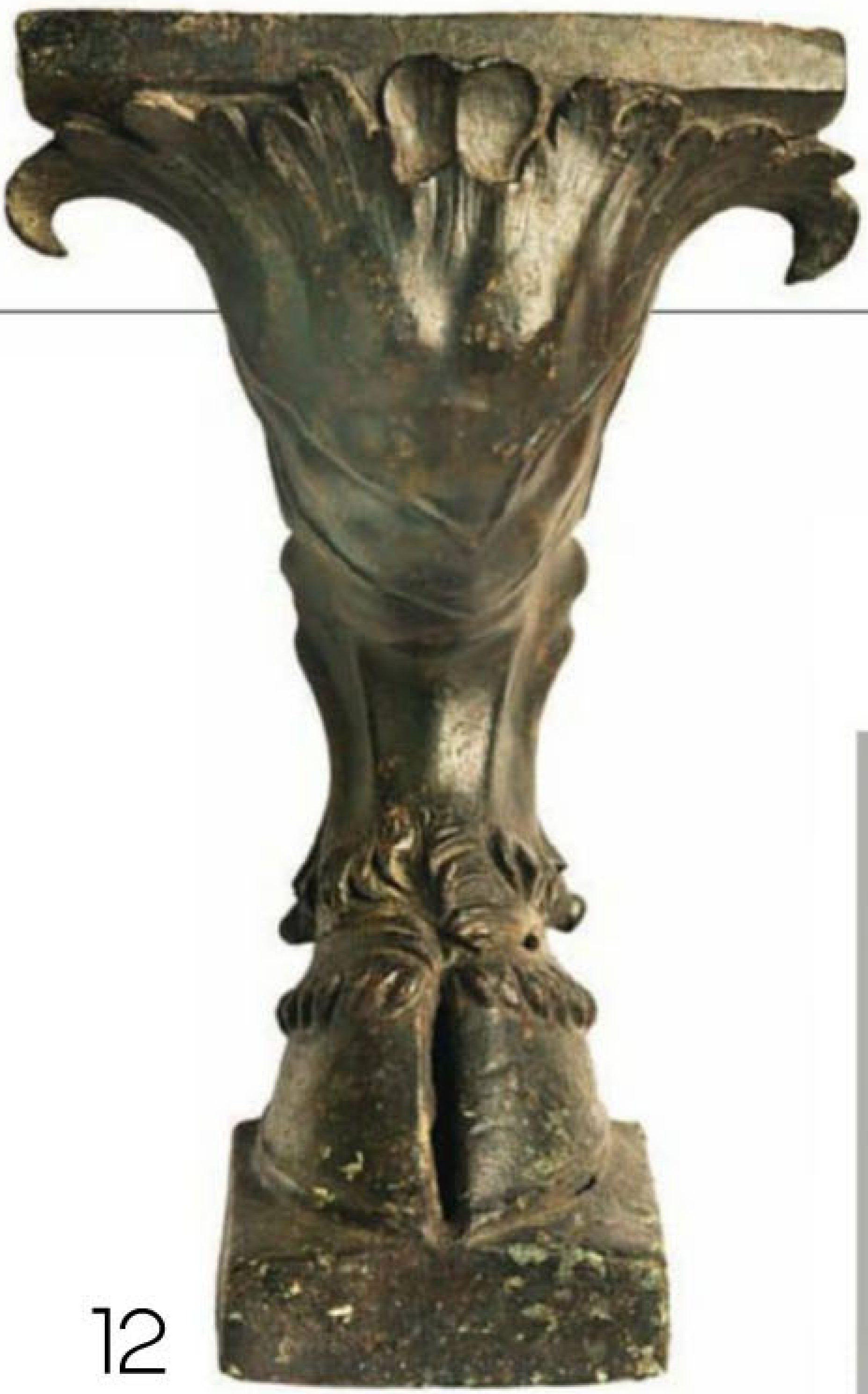

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The fertile fields of Campania in southern Italy attracted different settlers in antiquity, among them the Etruscans, who founded several cities near Greek colonies. Paolo Giulierini investigates the archaeological legacy of the Etruscans in this part of Italy.

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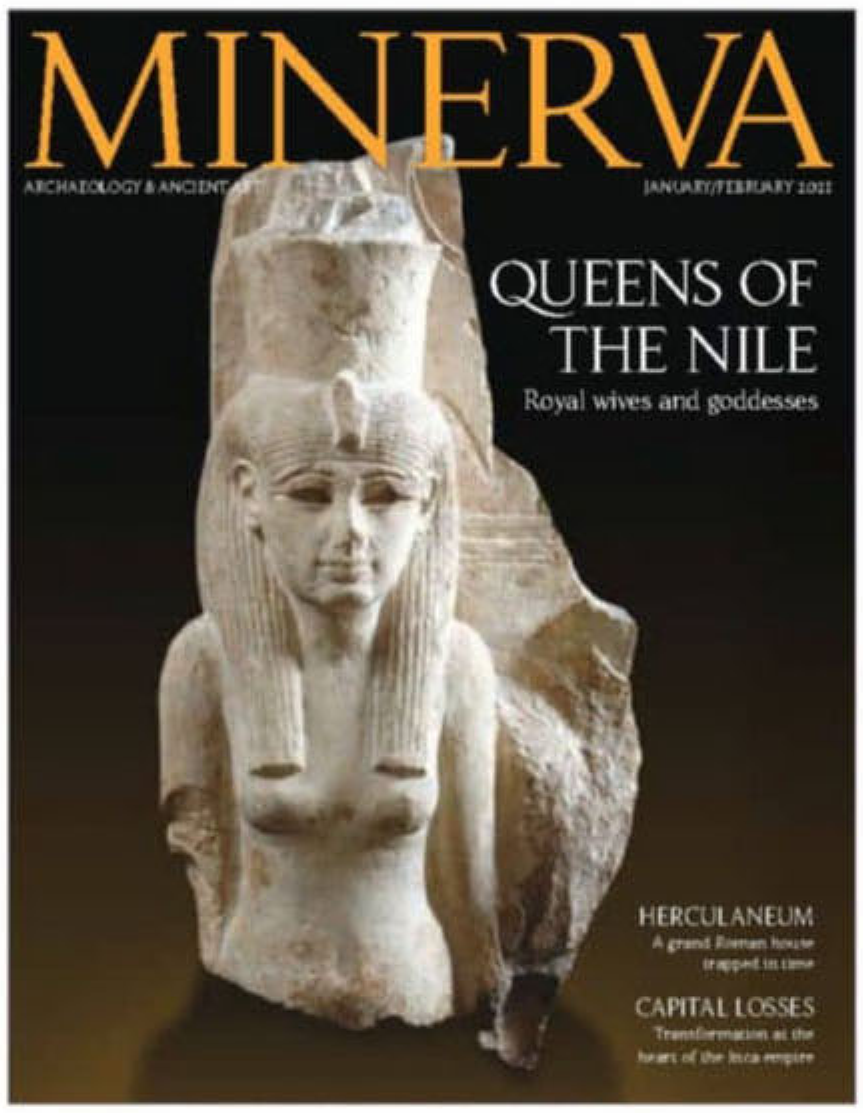
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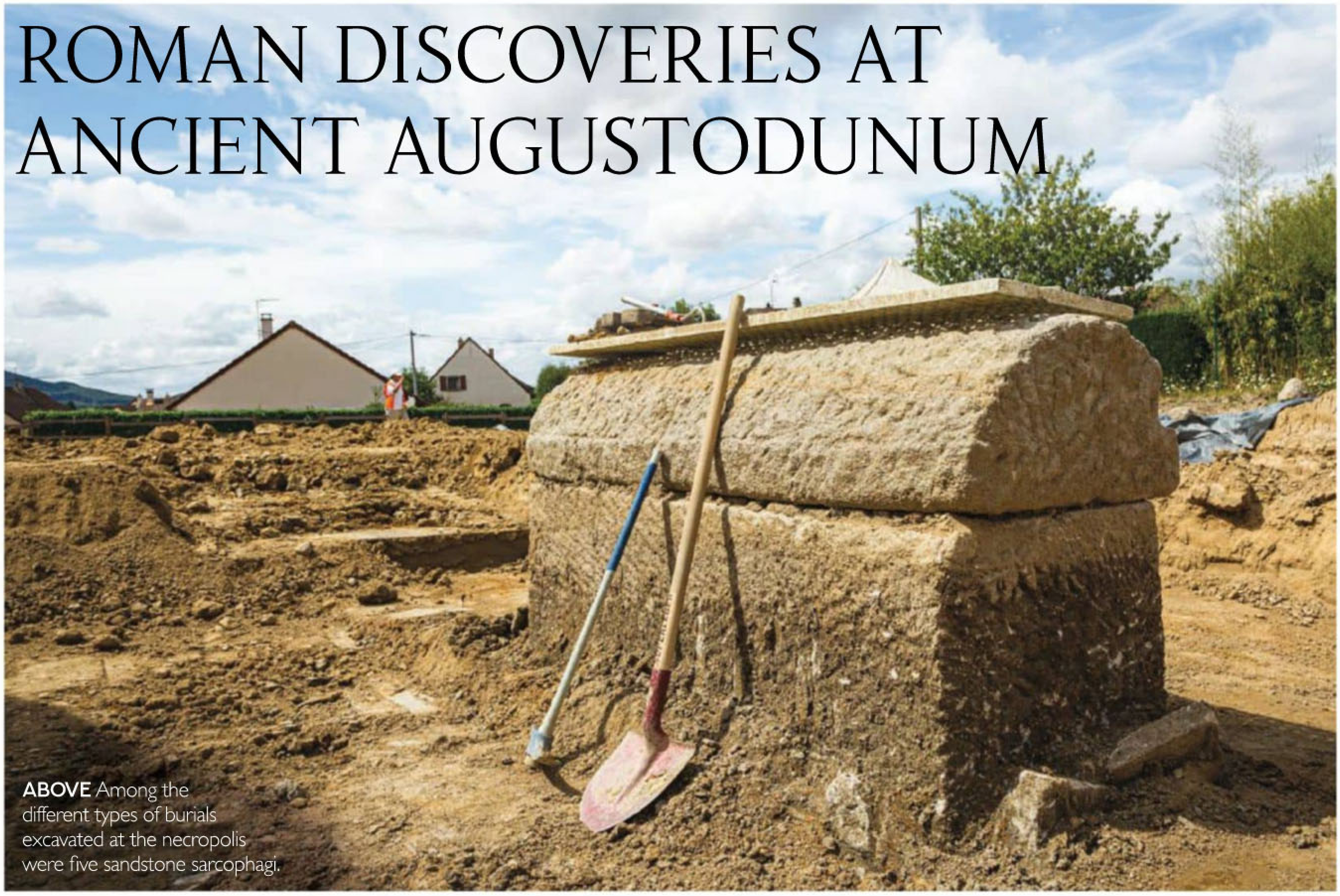
Statue of the Egyptian goddess Mut, early 19th Dynasty.
CREDIT *Museo Egizio, Turin*

IN THE NEWS

Stories from the world of archaeology, art, and museums

ROMAN DISCOVERIES AT ANCIENT AUGUSTODUNUM



ABOVE Among the different types of burials excavated at the necropolis were five sandstone sarcophagi.

PHOTOS: © Christophe Fouquin, Inrap

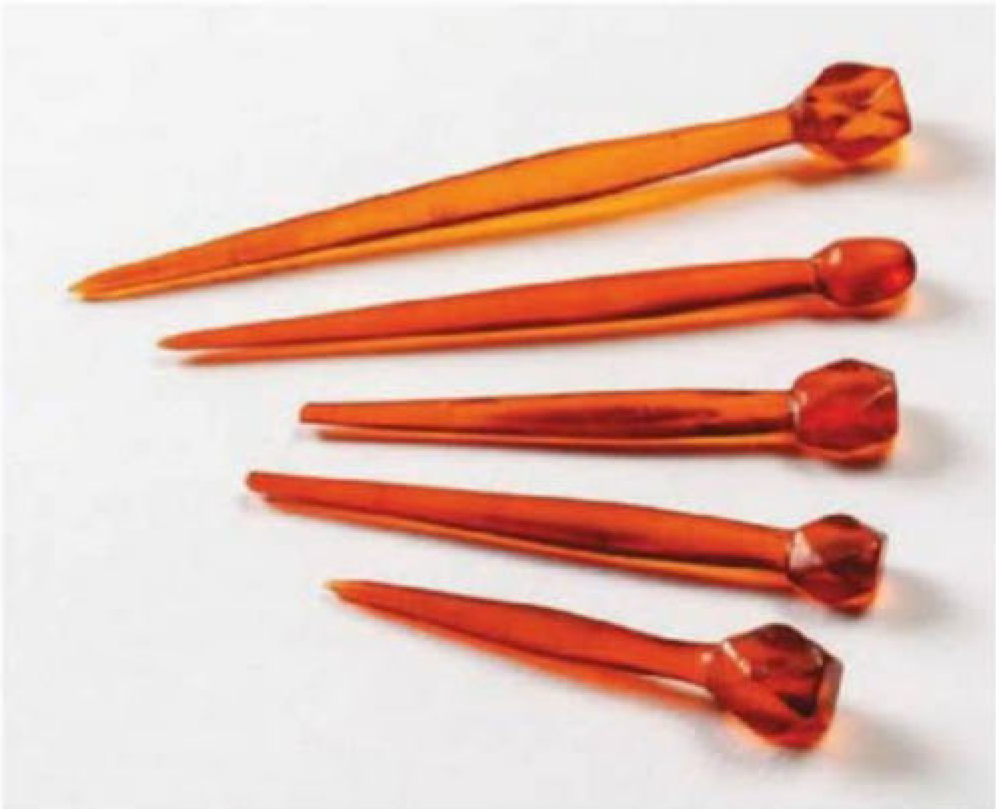
More than 230 graves have been uncovered at a necropolis in the French city of Autun, revealing a diverse mix in burial practices over a period of nearly 200 years, as well as luxury grave goods from the 3rd and 4th centuries AD that highlight the wealth of some of its ancient inhabitants.

The site in the Saint-Pierre-l'Estrier quarter of Autun, or Augustodunum as it was known in antiquity, was explored in the summer of 2020 by archaeologists from Inrap in collaboration with the Autun City Archaeology Service. The large necropolis emerged around AD 250, when the three main necropoleis in the city were in decline. Why there was this shift remains unclear, but the new necropolis provided evidence of higher social diversity. It was also a time when Christianity was on the rise.

Excavations directed by Carole Fossurier found a range of different burial practices. There were mausoleums, a wooden building, and a tile structure, which resembled burials of the early empire, as well as five sandstone sarcophagi and 15 lead coffins.

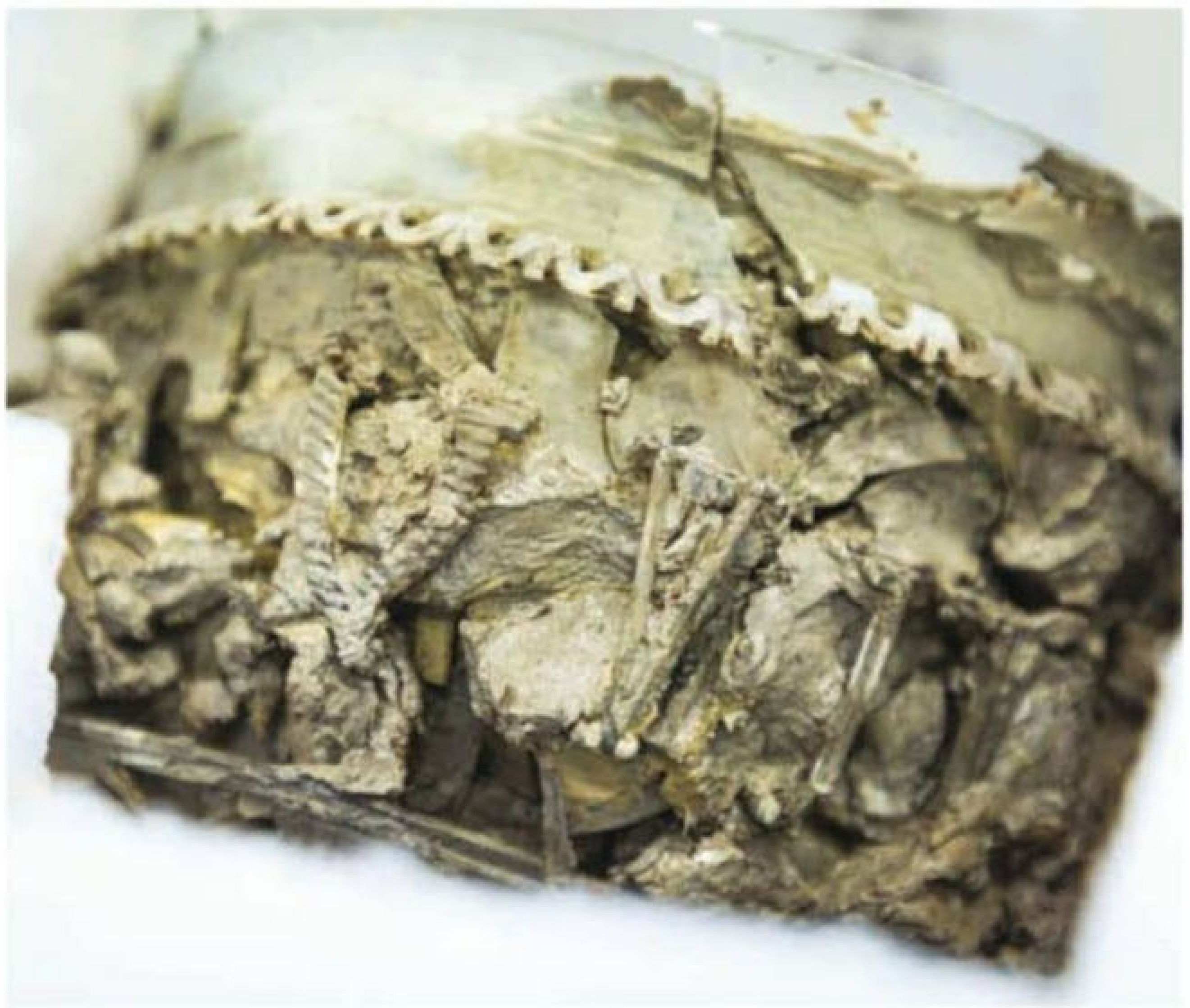
These burials yielded grave goods that indicate the wealth of Autun's elite. One exceptional find is a cage cup or *vas diatretum*, a reticulated glass vessel that is one of the highest forms of Roman glass art. It was found in fragments, but will be carefully restored to its complete form, including its inscription: *Vivas feliciter* ('Live in bliss').

Only around ten complete examples of this type of refined glassware are known, and they may have been restricted to those closest to imperial power. Archaeologist Michel Kasprzyk says, 'Other examples of *vas diatretum* or cage-cup glass have been



RIGHT Amber pins were found at the feet of the individual buried in the largest sarcophagus, dating to the 4th century AD.

PHOTO: © Denis Gliksman, Inrap



ABOVE This exquisite type of reticulated glass vessel, *vas diatretum*, is rare, with only around ten complete examples known. The inscription reads *Vivas feliciter* ('Live in bliss').

found across the whole Roman Empire – from Britannia to Egypt and North Africa – but also in non-Roman lands. However, this kind of Roman glass is very rare, and complete examples are scarcer (fewer than ten for the whole ancient world). In cases where the context of their discovery is known, they come from graves with luxury goods, such as the Taranes grave (North Macedonia), which also contained a large silver dish and an inscribed gold crossbow brooch – these seem to have been an imperial gift. Many come from places near important Late Roman towns (in Roman West Cologne, Trier, Milan, Rome, Aquileia, or Carthage), but also rich Late Roman villas, such as, in Gaul, the Villa Séviac.'

Other impressive artefacts unearthed include a set of amber pins, an embossed gold ring, and a gold ring, all from the largest sarcophagus in the burial ground. The team also found pins and rings made of jet, and further gold jewellery, including earrings. Analysis of fragments of fabric recovered from a lead coffin showed they were woven with golden thread and detected traces of purple, all pointing to the wealth of the people who could afford such costly materials in their graves.

Kasprzyk explains, 'The high number of luxury grave goods – the *vas diatretum*, the gold embroidered clothes – gives us a good insight into the local ruling aristocracy, previously known solely from early 4th century texts. These texts, called the *Panegyrici latini*, were some kind of speeches showing close relationships between the elites of Autun and the courts of emperors Constantius Chlorus and Constantine, who ruled from Augusta Treverorum (now Trier in Germany) between AD 293 and 312. We knew that some luxury marble funerary ornaments – like the marble sarcophagus of Euphronia and a marble slab with the Greek funerary inscription of Pektorios, one of the oldest pieces of archaeological evidence for Christianity in Gaul – were found at the Saint-Pierre-l'Etrier graveyard. Late Roman mausoleums were still standing in this graveyard before the French Revolution. Many lead coffins were also known at Saint-Pierre, but we had no expectations of discovering the rich grave goods found in the summer of 2020, probably mainly due to the lack of recent excavations on the site.'

MORE MUMMIES UNVEILED AT SAQQARA

Continuing excavations at the ancient Egyptian necropolis of Saqqara have unearthed from burial wells 100 intact wooden coffins, dating back more than 2,000 years. The new discoveries follow on from the find of 59 painted coffins in the same location, announced in October. Now the newly excavated coffins have been removed, further work will be done to explore the shafts behind them.

As well as the coffins, which date to the Late Period (525-332 BC) and Ptolemaic Dynasty (323-30 BC), Egyptian archaeologists found shabtis, amulets, four gilded funerary masks, 40 statues of Ptah Sokar, a prominent god of Saqqara (some with gilded parts), and two wooden statues of a person named Phnomus.

During the event announcing the discovery, archaeologists opened a coffin and carried out an X-ray of the mummy within. According to Mostafa Waziri, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the X-ray showed that the mummified man was in general good health during his lifetime, between 165cm and 175cm tall, and between 40 and 45 years of age when he died.

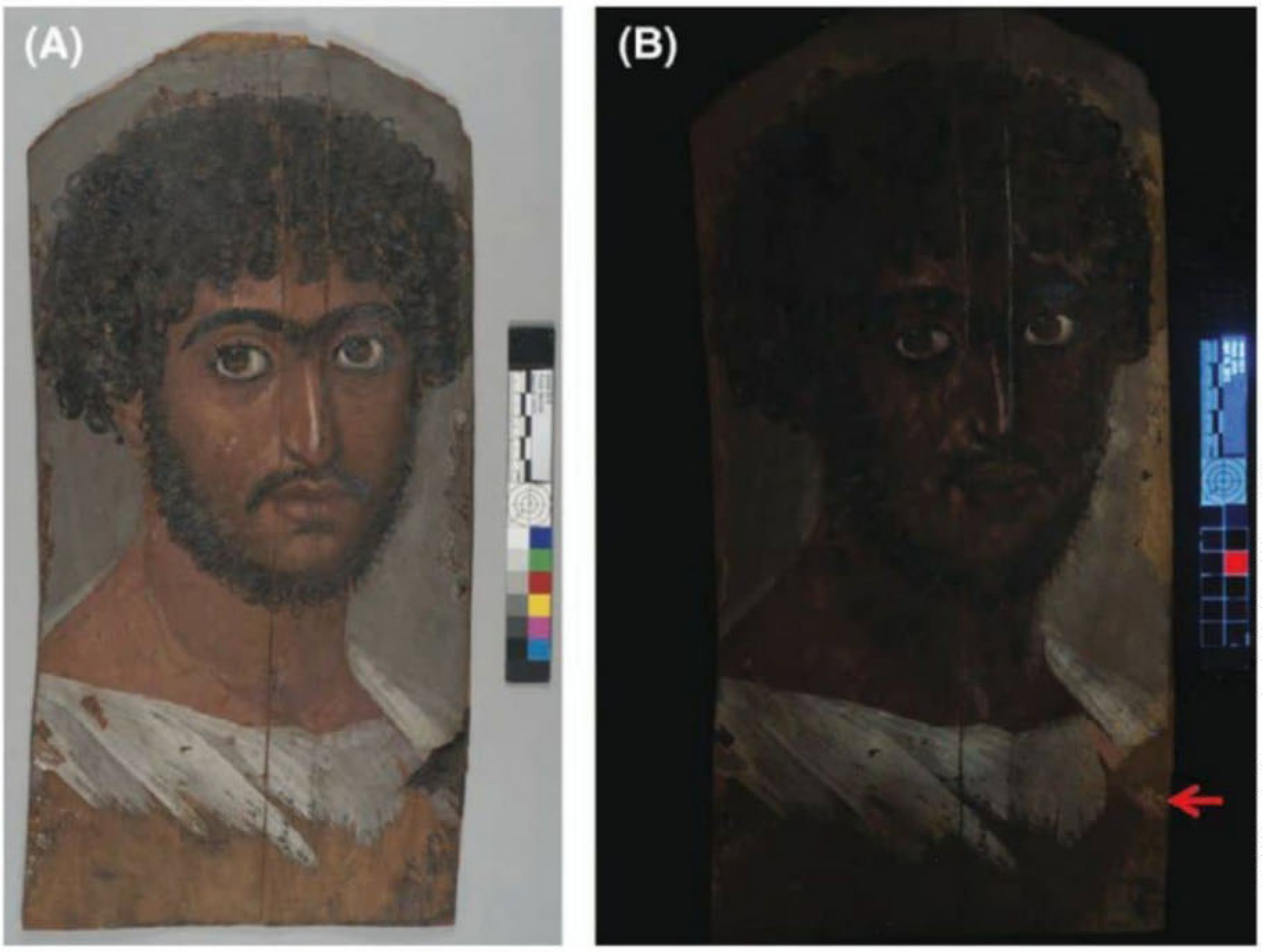
The 59 coffins announced in October were transferred to the Grand Egyptian Museum, while the most recent discoveries will be divided between the Grand Egyptian Museum, the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation, the New Administrative Capital Museum, and the Egyptian Museum of Tahrir.

Saqqara is home to many burials, including the Step Pyramid of Djoser. The particular part of the site where these coffins were found is the 'cemetery of senior statesmen'. In this area, cats, birds, and other animals have been discovered, as has the tomb of a 5th Dynasty priest named Wahtye, which has recently gained renewed attention as the subject of the Netflix documentary *Secrets of the Saqqara Tomb*.

BELOW One of Saqqara's newly discovered coffins was opened for X-ray analysis.

PHOTO: courtesy of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities

A STUDY IN PURPLE



IMAGES: The Walters Art Museum, Acquired by Henry Walters, 1912

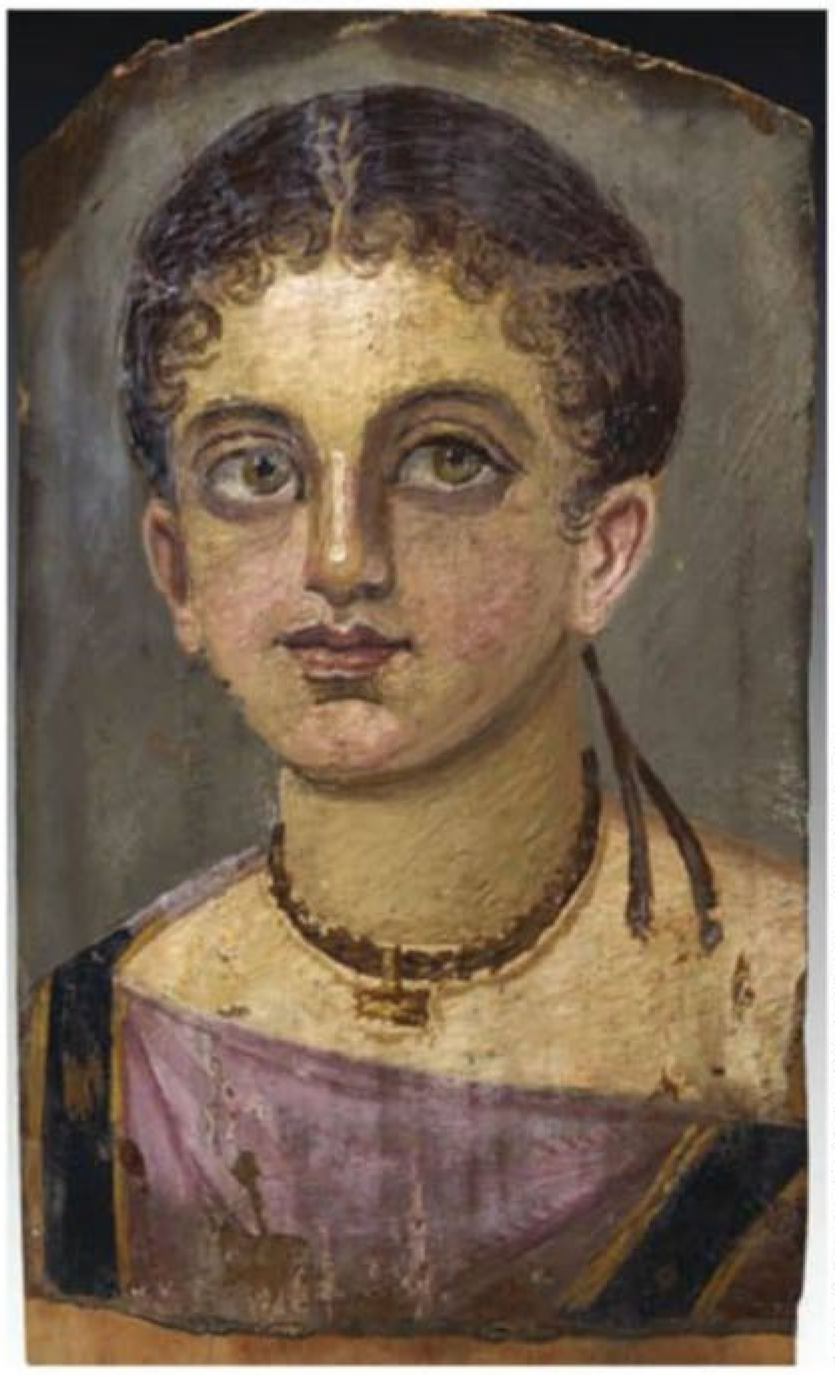


IMAGE: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Estate of Isabel B Wilson

ABOVE LEFT & MIDDLE The 'Portrait of a Bearded Man' from the Walters Art Museum (*c.* AD 170-180; A), and (B) the portrait under ultraviolet light. The purple *clavi* on the shoulders appear pink-orange, indicated by an arrow. **ABOVE RIGHT** The 'Portrait of a Young Girl' from the Museum of Fine Art, Houston, with chromium detected in the purple paint.

A tiny speck of purple paint from the 2nd century AD may yield clues to how ancient artists created the extraordinary portrait panels that accompanied mummified bodies into the afterlife.

Known as 'Fayum portraits', after the area in Middle Egypt where they were found, these vivid likenesses date from the Roman occupation of Egypt between 30 BC and the middle of the 3rd century AD. Painted on wood panels or linen, the portraits were attached to the bound bodies of their subjects. Today, more than 1,000 of these mummy portraits survive in museums and collections around the world. They depict a range of men and women, from the very young to the very old – but little is known of the artists who created them, or where and how they were made.

One such Fayum portrait, known as the 'Portrait of a Bearded Man' (*c.*AD 170-180), was acquired by the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1912. It portrays a man wearing a toga bearing two *clavi* (purple stripes used to denote high status, worn by, among others, Roman senators). Under examination at the museum, it was noticed that the particles used to paint the *clavi* appeared different in structure from other paint particles on the thin wooden panel. Might a 'special' paint have been used to further enhance the idea of high status? In order to find out, a 50-micron sample of the pigment was sent to Darryl Butt, a materials scientist at the University of Utah, for further analysis.

The use of the colour purple to denote high status was common. The most-valued ancient colour was Tyrian purple, an organic substance extracted from the glands of sea snails and used as a simple dye or colouring agent. In the case of the *clavi*, the purple used seemed to have a gem-like structure, and under UV radiation appeared not as a simple dye. Analysis showed that the paint was in fact a pigment that contained a combination of different components, including lead and chromium.

One possible explanation, Butt suggests, is that the elements could have been picked up incidentally as part of the production process of dyeing. As only a small amount of lead was found to be present, it might be that its inclusion was not intentional but was instead a result of using a lead-lined dyeing vat.

'Over time, a story or hypothesis emerged', Butt says, 'suggesting that the Egyptian dyers produced red dye in these lead vats.' And when they were done dyeing at the end of the day, he adds, there may have been a sludge that developed inside the vat that was purplish in colour. 'Or they were very smart, and they may have found a way to take their red dye, and to shift the colour towards purple by adding a salt with transition metals and a mordant [a substance that fixes a dye] intentionally to synthesise a purple pigment.' At the moment, Butt admits, we simply 'don't know'.

Another portrait found to contain the same element, chromium, in its purple pigment is the 'Portrait of a Young Girl' in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Other similarities, such as the shape of its wooden panel and the background colour used, and even stylistic connections, could mean that the panels were produced in similar places or times, and in some cases, even by the same artist.

As most mummy portraits were grave-robbed, a lack of archaeological context means that studies like this, published in the *International Journal of Ceramic Engineering and Science*, can provide valuable information. In an international collaboration entitled APPEAR (Ancient Portrait Paintings: Examination, Analysis, and Research; *www.getty.edu/museum/research/appear_project*), 47 museums with mummy portraits are collating such findings to learn more about the makers of these extraordinary portraits and their methods.

AN UNKNOWN MANUSCRIPT BY A MEDIEVAL MASTER

IMAGES: British Library Board

The British Library – the national library for the United Kingdom – has announced the new acquisition of a late 15th-century copy of the Psalms, a previously unknown example of the work of one of the most-influential artists of the late medieval period.

Known as the 'Master of Edward IV' for their contributions to manuscripts made for King Edward IV (most of which are now in the Royal Collection at the British Library), the artist skilfully painted eight large initials for this newly acquired Psalter. This copy of the Psalms, made in Bruges, Belgium, might initially have been part of a volume or set of volumes of liturgical texts. It was owned by Thomas Houchon Lucas (1460-1539) of Suffolk, who was Solicitor General under Henry VII and whose coat of arms has been added to the manuscript, giving it the name by which it is now known: the Lucas Psalter.

Kathleen Doyle, from the British Library, says, 'The Lucas Psalter is of clear artistic and cultural significance, and tells a fascinating English story. The manuscript reveals the close links with Europe and the interests of a middle-ranking figure in Tudor society, Thomas Houchon Lucas of Suffolk, who was a secretary to Jasper Tudor. Lucas rose to a high office of state under Henry VII. His added arms (with those of his wife) demonstrate the distinctive and long-standing interest of English laity in the text of the Psalms.'

The acquisition is an important one, as only a few individual Psalter manuscripts from this period in England are known, and so the Lucas Psalter opens up a window for future research into the iconography, the liturgical elements, and the use of the manuscript.

The Lucas Psalter will be digitised by the library and made freely available online at *www.bl.uk/manuscripts/*. It will also go on display at the British Library in London.

ANIMAL ARCHAEOLOGY

CREATURE COMFORTS

Analysis of a turkey-feather blanket from south-eastern Utah has yielded new insights into how such blankets were made by Ancestral Pueblo people in the American South-west. The blanket measures 99 x 108cm and is approximately 800 years old. According to research published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, around 180m of yucca-fibre cord was needed, as well as some 11,500 feathers, taken from between four and ten turkeys, depending on the length of the feathers. The feathers were probably gathered from live turkeys when they moulted.

FELINE OLD

During work at a viewpoint in the Pampa de Nasca, archaeologists from Peru's Ministry of Culture found a 37m-long geoglyph in the shape of a feline. Based on its stylistic features, which have parallels in the ceramics and textiles of the Paracas culture, this feline has been dated to the Late Paracas period, *c.*200-100 BC. This means it pre-dates the more famous geoglyphs of the region, the Nasca Lines. Thanks to natural erosion and its location on a steep slope, the feline was barely visible, but has since been cleaned and conserved.

PET PARADISE

A new study published in *Antiquity* (*https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2020.191*) examining graves at pet cemeteries in Newcastle and London, since the first one opened in 1881, has identified trends in the relationships between English people and their pets over a period of 100 years. The analysis by Eric Tourigny from Newcastle University has found that pets were referred to in the Victorian era as companions and friends, but after the Second World War there is a rise in references to pets as family members and in family surnames being included on their tombstones. Also on the increase in the 20th century were mentions of a pet afterlife, and of future reunions between people and their pets.

MY DEAR
WHISKEY
9-10-1970 – 5-7-1987
ALWAYS REMEMBERED

IMAGE: E Tourigny/Antiquity Publications Ltd

DEIR EL-BAHRI, 1894

Tensions were already high among the archaeologists, surveyors, and artists of the Archaeological Survey of Egypt in 1891 when an eventful dispute arose on Christmas Eve.

The first season (1890-1891) of the Egypt Exploration Fund's survey set out to explore monuments along a 25km stretch of the Nile, including the Middle Kingdom cemetery at Beni Hasan, where governors and administrators were buried. Under field director Percy Newberry, surveyor George Willoughby Fraser recorded the architecture and locations of the tombs, while artist Marcus Blackden helped Newberry copy their decoration, and produced colour facsimiles of key details, like the birds from the tomb of Khnumhotep II *(shown below)*.

But work was slow, and so funds were found for extra staff, among them 17-year-old artist Howard Carter, for the next season. During this second season, on 24 December 1891, Newberry and Carter were taken to a nearby site by a group of Bedouin. While this was not the tomb of the pharaoh Akhenaten as had been rumoured, it was still an important location: the alabaster quarries of Hatnub described in ancient texts.

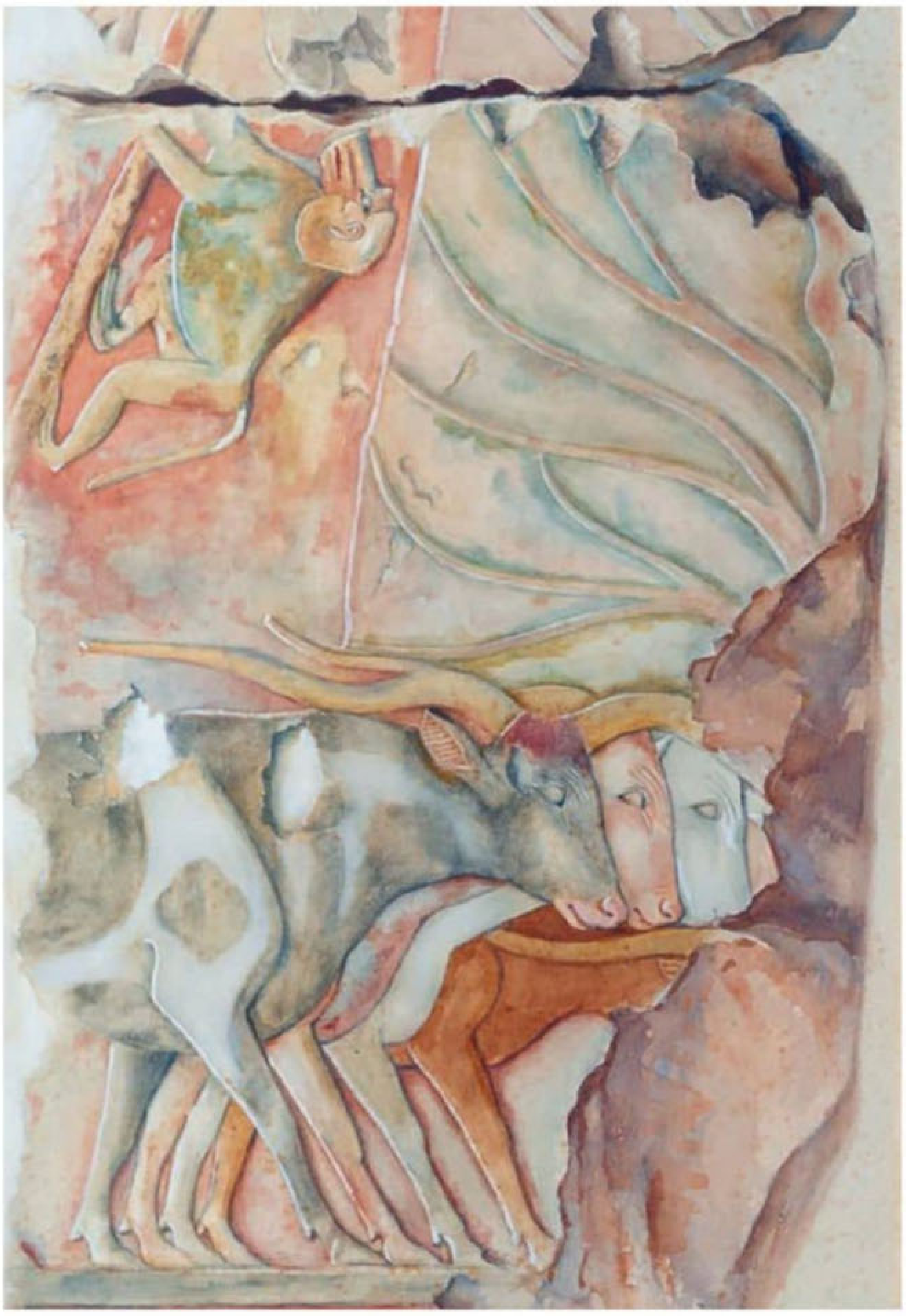
They returned to camp at Deir el-Bersha to share the news. But Fraser and Blackden were seemingly not as pleased with the find and mysteriously set off soon after. Five days later, they returned, having surveyed Hatnub alone and recorded the important inscriptions, essentially claiming the site as only theirs to publish.

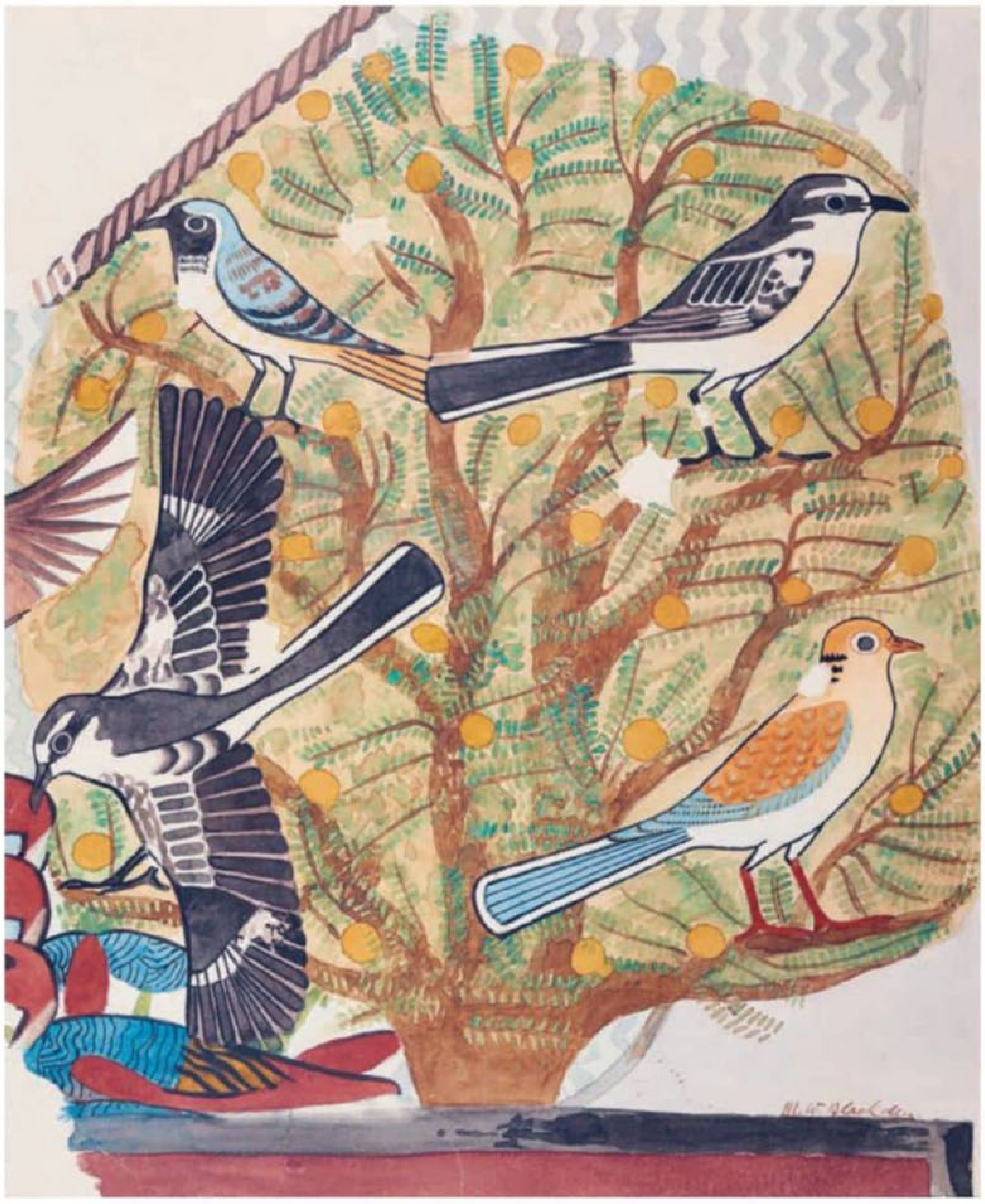
The fallout was considerable. Neither Blackden nor Fraser ('Dirty Dogs!', Carter wrote) were hired again, and Blackden did not go to Amarna to work under Flinders Petrie as had been planned. Carter was sent instead and received training that helped fix his course on a decades-long career in Egyptian archaeology, famously going on to discover the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.

After Amarna, Carter was dispatched to another of the EEF's projects, the excavation of the mortuary temple of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri. Between 1893 and 1899, he was in charge of recording the temple's fine painted reliefs, assisted by artists including Rosalind Paget. In order to better capture a three-dimensional art form on paper, Carter eschewed the main method used on the Survey of tracing from the walls. The exquisite results can be seen in Paget's watercolour of bulls from one wall (*below*), and Carter's reproduction (*opposite*) of a scene in which Thutmosis I (Hatshepsut's father) and his mother Seniseneb make offerings to the god Anubis.

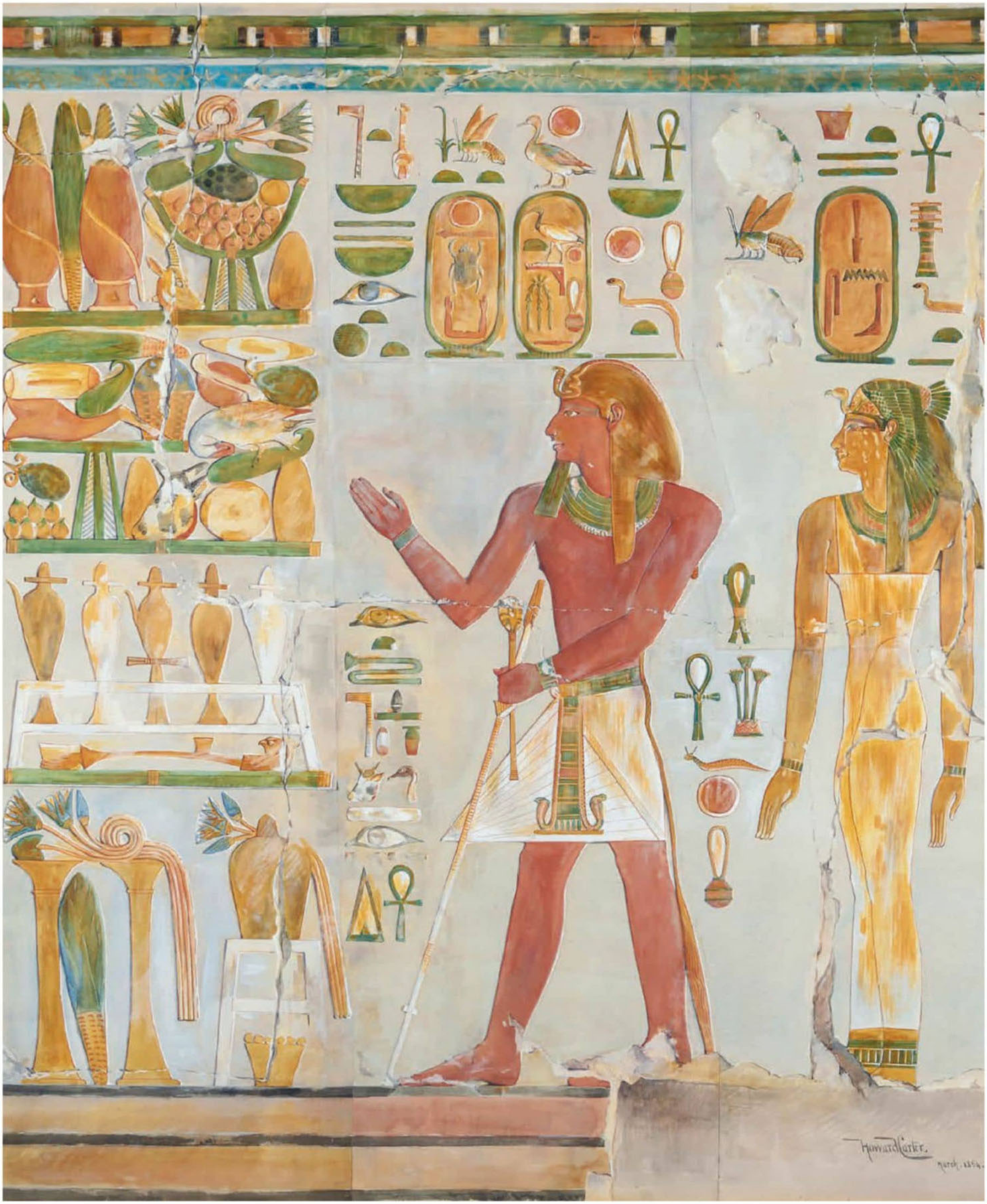
It was through this work at Deir el-Bahri, Carter recalled, that he learnt the most about Egyptian art.

These images appear in a new book by Chris Naunton that delves into documents relating to key figures in the history of Egyptology. *Egyptologists' Notebooks* is published by Thames & Hudson (price £32, ISBN 978-0500295298).





IMAGES: © courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society TEXT: L Marchini


Howard Carter.
March. 1894.

GRAND DESIGNS

IMAGE: Scott Warren © J Paul Getty Trust with permission of Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

ABOVE The spectacular House of the Bicentenary is located along the Decumanus Maximus, or Main Street, of ancient Herculaneum, in the close vicinity of the busy heart of the Roman town.

One of the most lavish dwellings in Roman Herculaneum, the House of the Bicentenary reopened to the public in 2019 after decades of conservation efforts. Francesco Sirano, Director of the Parco Archeologico di Ercolano, and Leslie Rainer from the Getty Conservation Institute tell the story of this magnificent house, its discovery, its decline, and how it has been brought to life once more.

Visitors stepping through the open doors of the House of the Bicentenary in 1938, to great celebration, were part of a 200-year-old tradition of exploring Herculaneum that started with the ancient city's official rediscovery in 1738. Similarly, those who walk around the newly reopened Roman townhouse today can gain insights into its discovery, excavation, and conservation.

Standing atop Vesuvius in the present day, looking out over the Bay of Naples, the archaeological site is just visible at the foot of the mountain. It is easy to see that Herculaneum lies directly in the path of any eruption flowing down the volcano's slopes to the sea. This is exactly what happened in AD 79, with waves of boiling hot gas and avalanches of volcanic material surging down, completely covering the Roman town. By the time the disaster was over, Herculaneum lay 30m underground and the shoreline had been pushed 500m out into the sea.

By contrast, the larger archaeological site of Pompeii lies landward, to the south of Vesuvius, and in AD 79, during the early phases of the eruption, it was not affected by the destructive volcanic surges. Instead, a tall cloud column that reached the stratosphere rose from Vesuvius, and a prevailing wind carried the lighter airborne volcanic particles in the direction of Pompeii, so the streets and buildings were covered in a heavy rain of ash and pumice stones. →

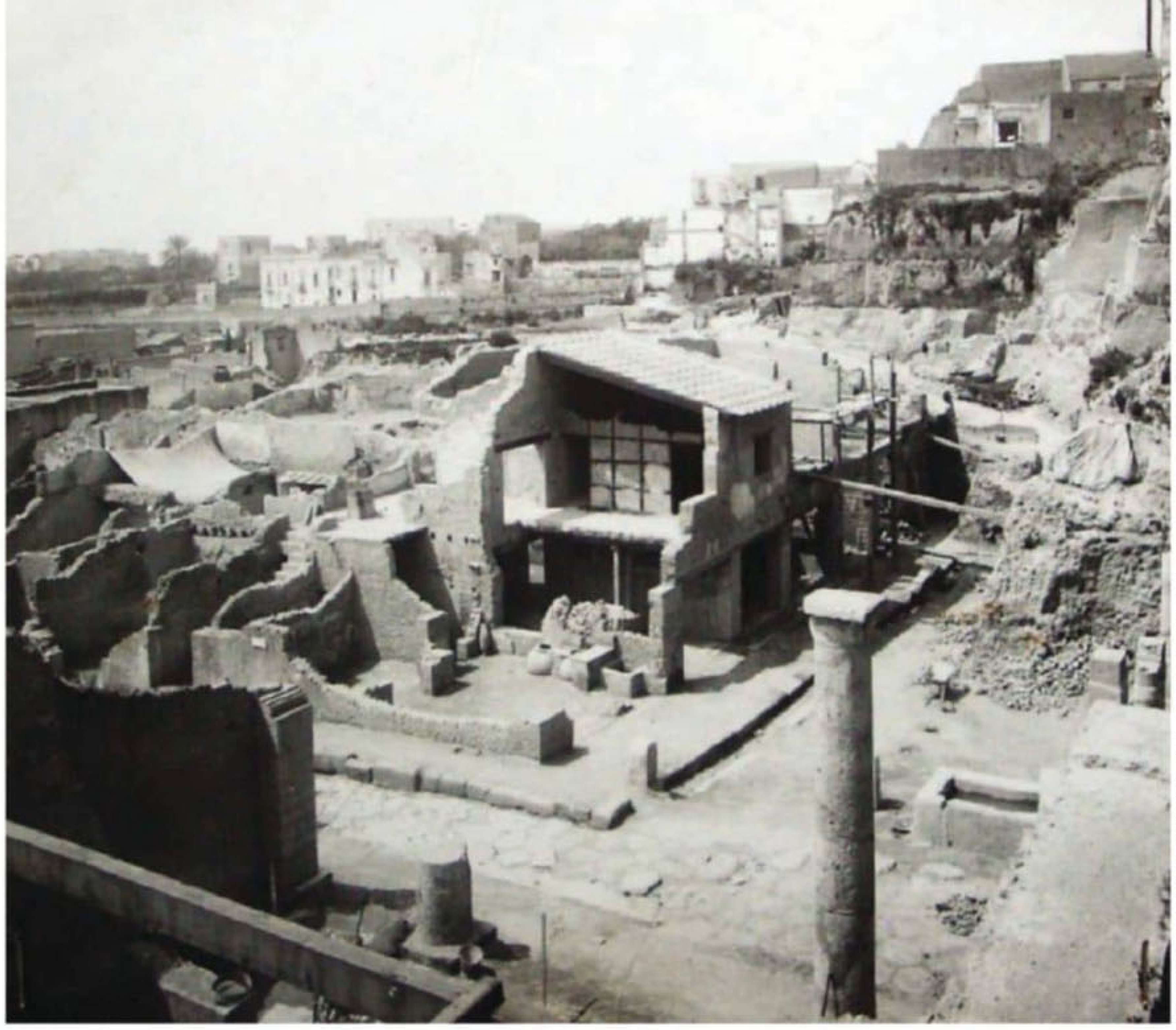
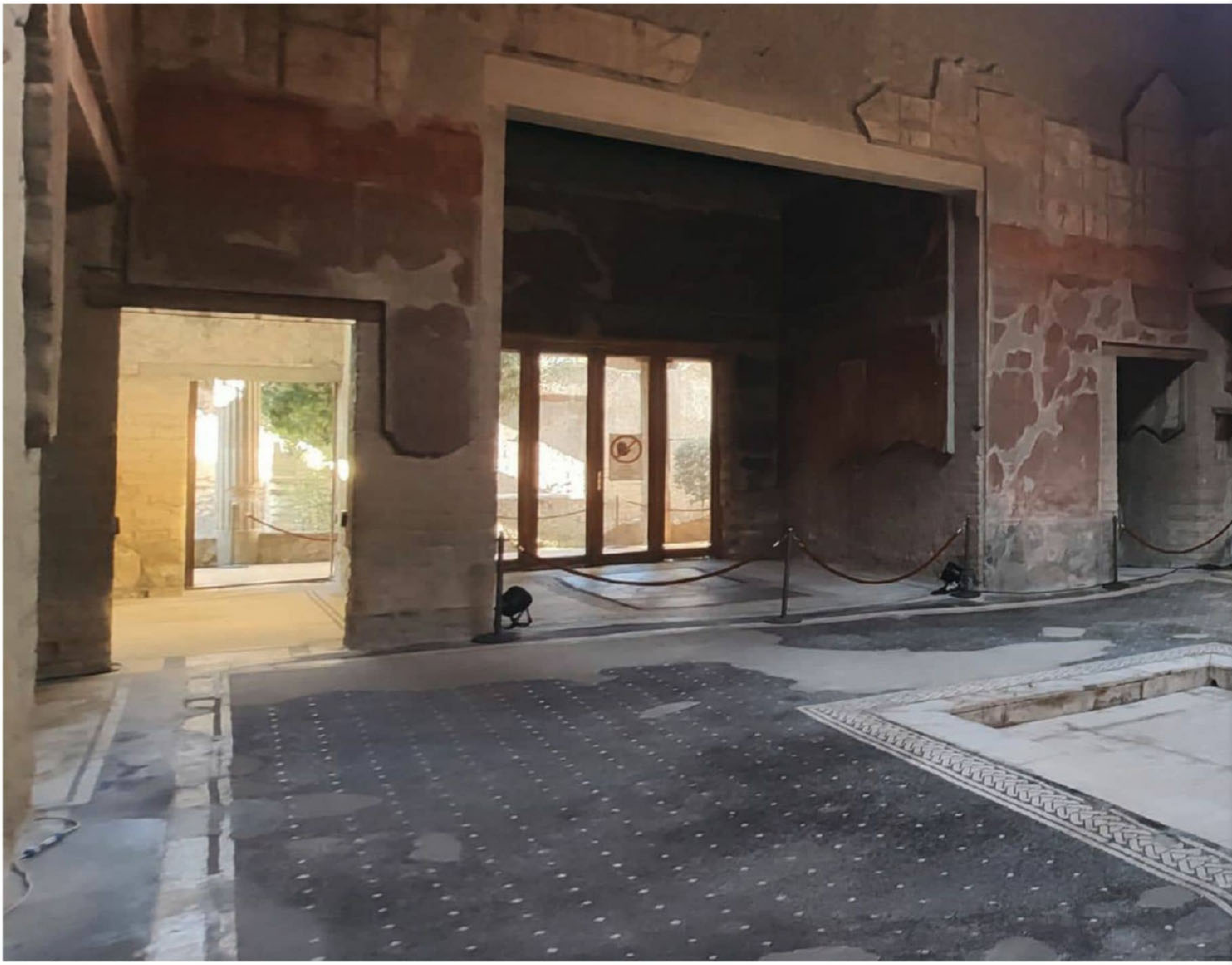


IMAGE: Historical Archives of the Soprintendenza Pompei, Maiuri, C2766

LEFT Excavated and restored in 1938, at the height of the Fascist-era excavations by Amedeo Maiuri, the House of the Bicentenary was the centrepiece of the bicentennial celebrations of the discovery of the site.

BELOW The House of the Bicentenary has a fairly classic layout for a Roman house of the time. Entering the central atrium (shown here) from the front door, visitors would have seen several rooms off to each side. The views through the house focused on the connection to the *tablinum* (at the back), and the peristyle garden beyond.

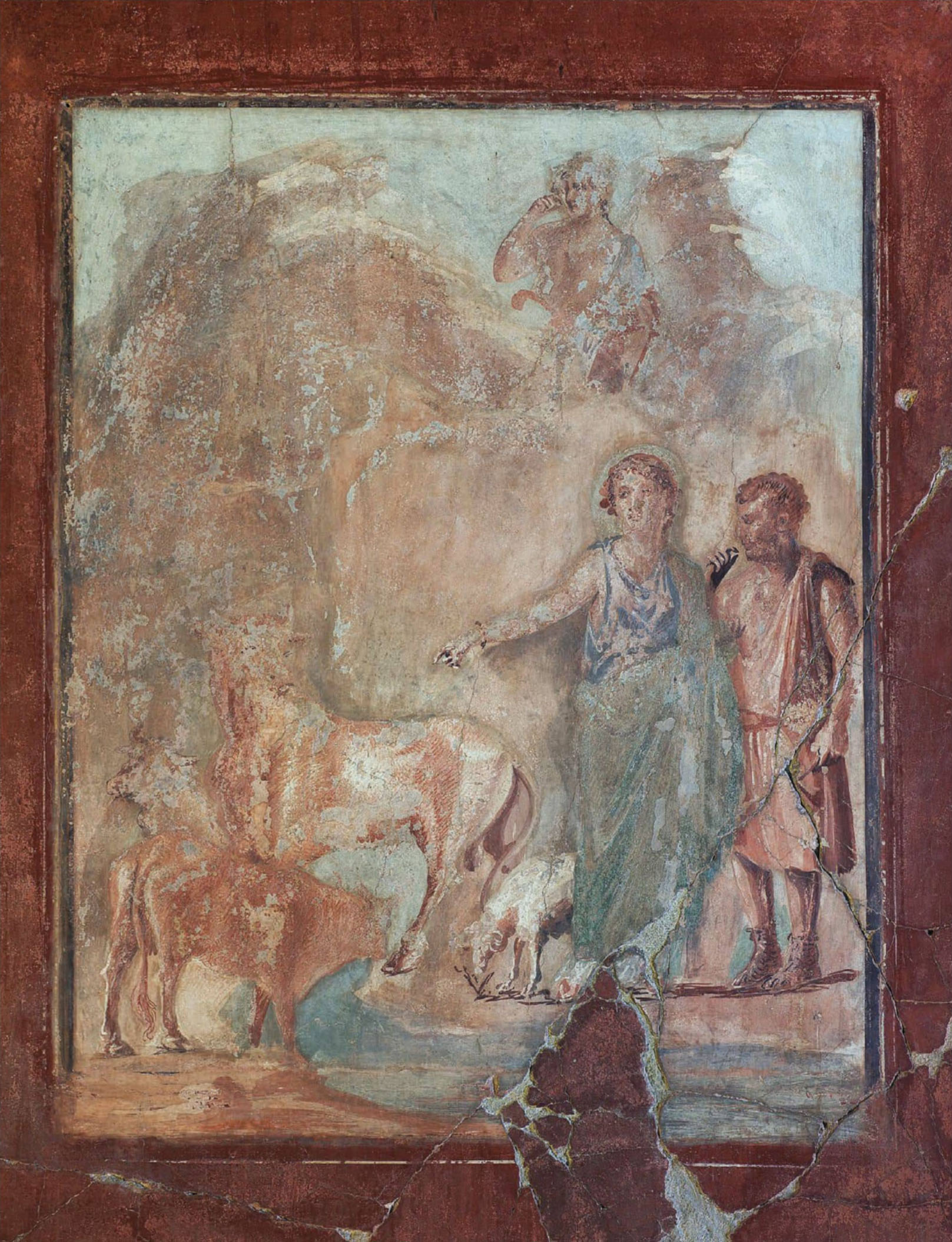


> "Pompeii impresses for the extent of the surviving city; Herculaneum amazes with its detail: loaves of bread, sliding doors, tables and stools, even a cradle."

These differences are part of what sets the two towns apart for archaeologists: the lighter material covering Pompeii makes it significantly easier to excavate in comparison to the thick layer of what hardened into tuff over Herculaneum. In addition, while both Roman towns had a wealth of public buildings and private residences, those at Herculaneum were sealed by the rock, allowing the exceptional preservation not only of the brick and mortar of the town's buildings, but also the more ephemeral organic materials: loaves of bread, sliding doors, tables and stools, and even a baby's cradle. Pompeii impresses for the extent of the surviving city; Herculaneum amazes with its detail.

When systematic explorations of buried Herculaneum started in 1738, under the Bourbon king Charles, they were carried out by tunnelling down to the Roman city, mapping it, and extracting artworks. Much of the stunning collection of Roman wall-paintings, mosaics, and objects in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples comes from this period. It was fortunate that the House of the Bicentenary was largely untouched by the tunnellers, so that, when open-air excavations were first properly organised in the early 20th century, it was found almost entirely intact. →

IMAGE: © Parco Archeologico di Ercolano



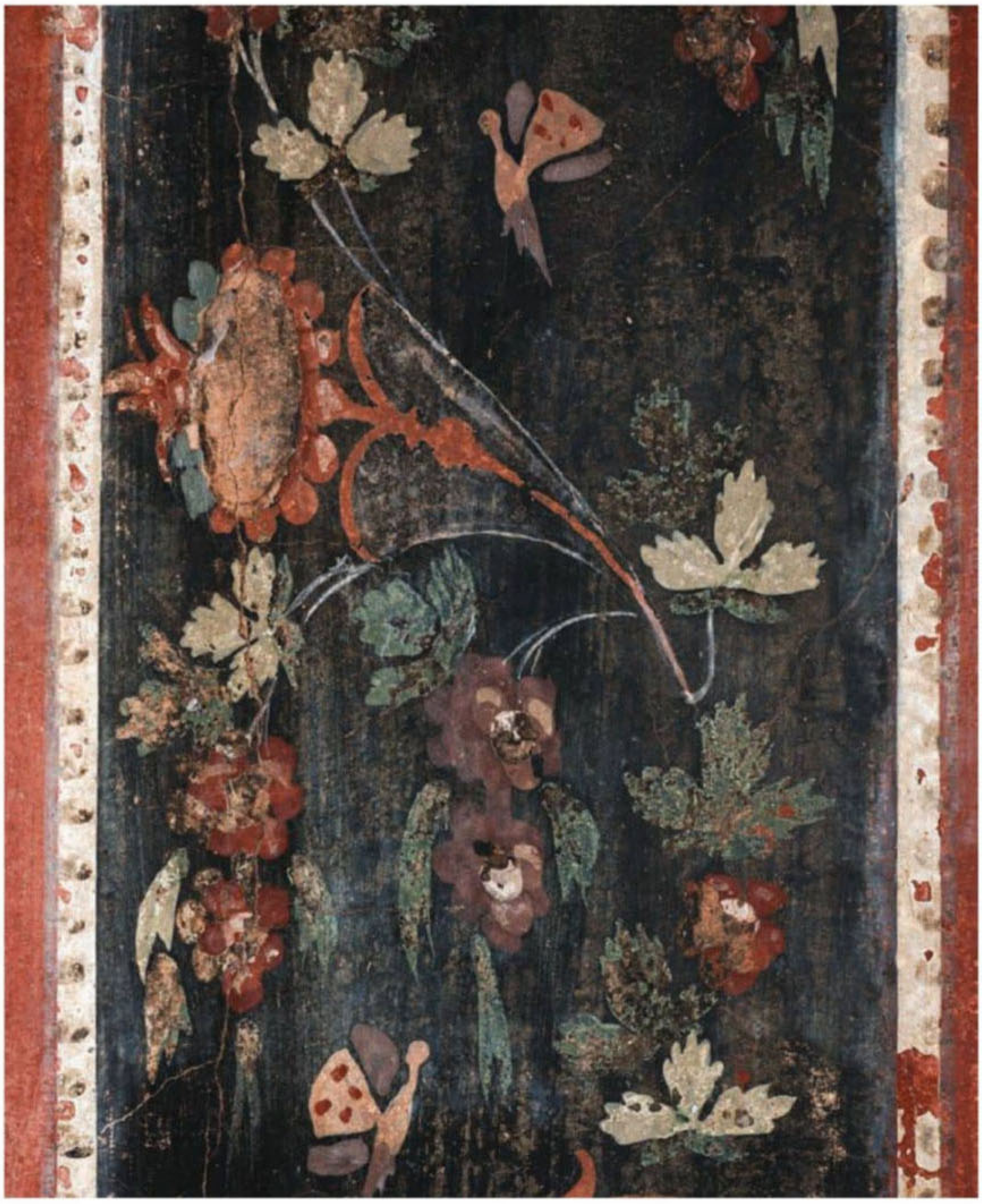


IMAGE: Laura Eboli © J Paul Getty Trust with permission of Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

LEFT In the central scene on the west wall of the *tablinum*, Pasiphae, queen of Crete, indicates to the craftsman Daedalus the bull that she desires. Interestingly, the painting appears to have been restored in antiquity with a reused fragment of painted plaster along the bottom of the scene.

ABOVE Fantastical plants and animals embellish the vertical black bands that separate the red and yellow sections along the east and west wall. It is thought that some of the colours were altered in the time since the eruption, burial, and exposure – for example, the cinnabar details and the green of the leaves.

IMAGE: Laura Eboli © J Paul Getty Trust with permission of Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

The archaeological site that can be visited today is largely a product of those 20th-century excavations, which were launched and carried out during the Fascist period, as part of the Mussolini government's love affair with all things Roman. The funding for this massive decades-long campaign may have been guaranteed thanks to political will, but this should not take away from the extraordinary achievements of Amedeo Maiuri, the archaeologist who uncovered Herculaneum's streets and houses, and his sizeable team of diggers, masons, and restorers, who worked with new technologies, including pneumatic drills, a small railway, and other mechanised tools.

By 1937, when that team reached the Decumanus Maximus, the main Roman road through the town, they had gained a decade's experience of how to peel back the volcanic rock from the fragile ancient structures and reveal their contents. They were ready to expose the façades of the houses that gave on to the main road and then, as their showpiece for the 1938 celebrations, they chose to excavate and open to the public what would become known as the House of the Bicentenary. This period marked the peak of Maiuri's approach: his team excavated the house, propping up the damaged walls, underpinning them where necessary, adding a new roof structure covered with Roman tiles to protect the interior, restoring the decorated floors and walls, and displaying in situ original objects that had been found during excavation.

The House of the Bicentenary is still one of the jewels of the site. Maiuri described it as a sumptuous noble house of elegant proportions. It is one of Herculaneum's largest townhouses, as would be expected for a property with such a prominent location on the main street of the town, close to the theatre, the law courts, and the forum. The stately 1st-century BC house was built on two storeys and its façade was decorated with a brightly coloured green-and-red chequerboard pattern, with a balcony looking over the street. Inside, a large atrium with a central marble pool led to an elegant room for receiving guests. Both were covered with lavish mosaic pavements and wall-paintings, all indicating that this was a noble house that belonged at some point to prosperous owners. Archaeologists have also noted, however, signs of changes in the form of rooms blocked off along the front of the house to create shops, low-quality repairs to a refined but damaged wall-painting, and an independent apartment created on the upper storey, signs that the house changed with its owners' needs over time. →

Of the many objects found in the House of the Bicentenary, perhaps the most intriguing was a set of wax tablets (**ABOVE**) in a chest, describing the legal case of an individual named Petronia Iusta, whose free status was in question. Other finds include a signet ring (**TOP**), a bronze animal hoof (**ABOVE LEFT**), and a perfume container in the shape of a bird (**LEFT**).

IMAGES: Araldo De Luca © J Paul Getty Trust with permission of Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

One of the most richly decorated rooms of the house was the private reception room, known as a *tablinum*, which would have had views on to an enclosed garden. Guests of the house's owner would have enjoyed two striking painted mythological scenes, flanked by roundels with satyrs, maenads, and bacchantes within a flamboyant red, yellow, and black decorative scheme. Even the floor was highly decorated, with a central area of coloured marble tiles, including vivid red and yellow stones, surrounded by a patterned black-and-white mosaic.

At the time of excavation, numerous objects were found in the house revealing the daily use of these spaces. They ranged from the everyday to the unique, and included bronze statuettes, a signet ring, kitchen items and terracotta lamps, and, perhaps most notably, a remarkable set of wax tablets found in a chest that describe the legal case of an individual named Petronia Iusta, who was the daughter of a slave and whose free status was in question. Archaeologists surmised that the case most likely involved the owners and servants, named in the tablets, who lived in this house. On the basis of this evidence, the house probably belonged to the family of Gaius Petronius Stephanus and his wife, Calatoria Themis, some of whom had played key roles in the local administration. The tablets are an excellent example of the type of intimate detail found in Herculaneum, where all types of materials were preserved in the volcanic stone.

Not long after the House of the Bicentenary had been restored and opened to the public, the onset of the Second World War halted excavation at Herculaneum. Over the course of the following years, the large workforce that looked after the site dwindled and resources for maintenance became scarce. After the war, Maiuri continued to fight for funding for Herculaneum, but the situation worsened after his retirement, and with the post-war economic crisis in Italy, the site, including the House of the Bicentenary, fell into disrepair. A portion of the roof of the House of the Bicentenary collapsed, other parts began to leak. In time, the risk of other unattended

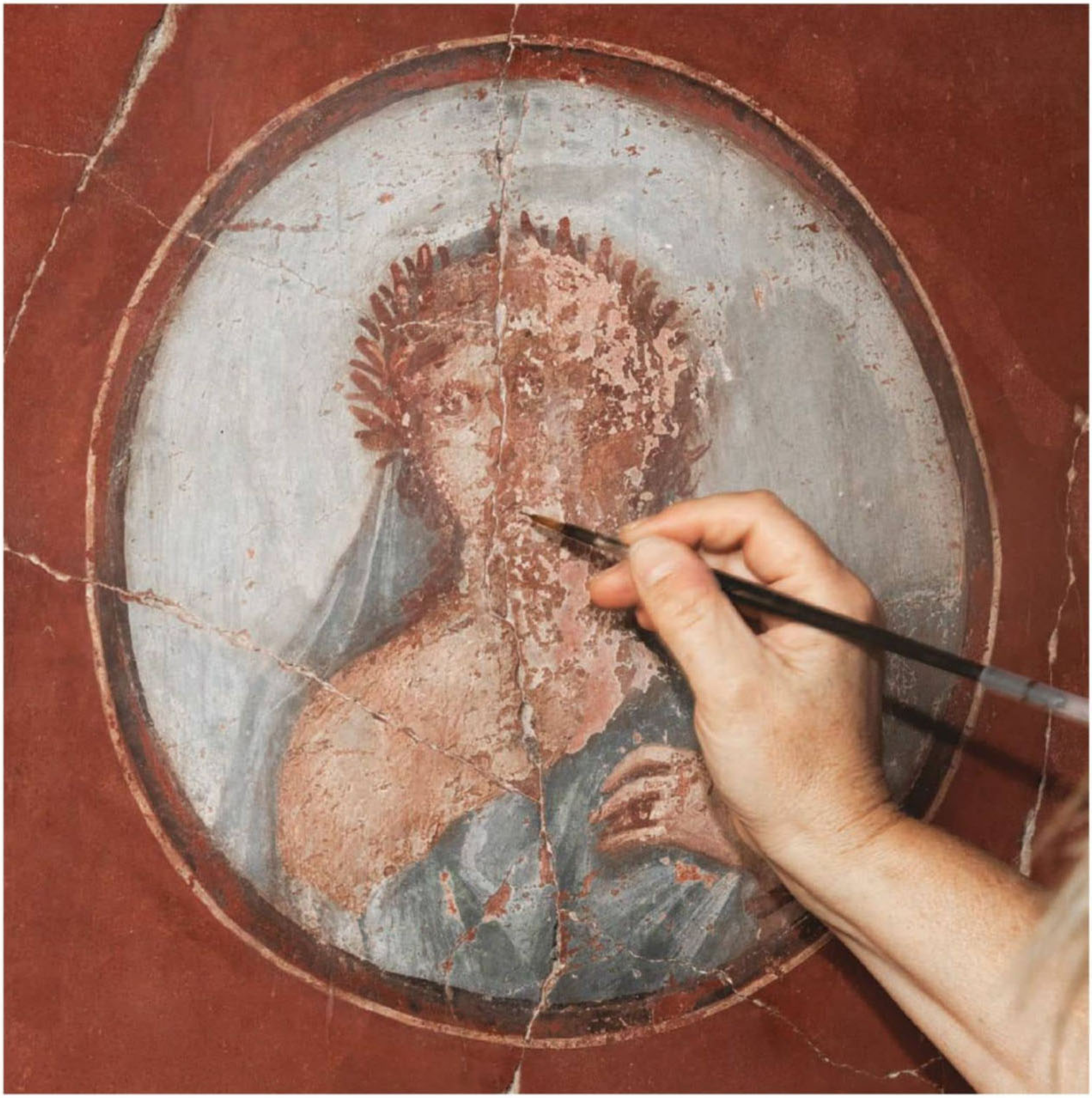


IMAGE: Araldo De Luca © J Paul Getty Trust with permission of Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

ABOVE Conservators carried out minimal in-painting in neutral tones, limited to areas of damage and loss. This approach allows visitors to appreciate the artistic quality of the paintings, while retaining archaeological information, and respecting the approach taken in 1938 to exhibit the wall-paintings as recomposed fragments.

structural issues led to the house being closed to the public in 1983, less than 50 years after its spectacular discovery. Once closed, with a lack of regular attention and maintenance, the Roman house and its architectural features suffered further. Parts of the structure of the upper levels became unstable, while rainwater and poor drainage damaged the wall paintings and the mosaic pavements.

The tide turned, however, in the early years of the 21st century, when a partnership was formed between the Italian heritage authorities and a philanthropic foundation, the Packard Humanities Institute. Together they created the Herculaneum Conservation Project, which brought the support of a multidisciplinary team of Italian heritage specialists and works contractors to the ancient town, who then began to address pressing issues across the site. Their active presence on site throughout the year meant they could support the local heritage authority and reverse the trend of spiralling decay, but also create favourable conditions for wider partnerships and new research. Very quickly, the presence of international teams of scientists, conservators, and other expertise became a common sight at Herculaneum.

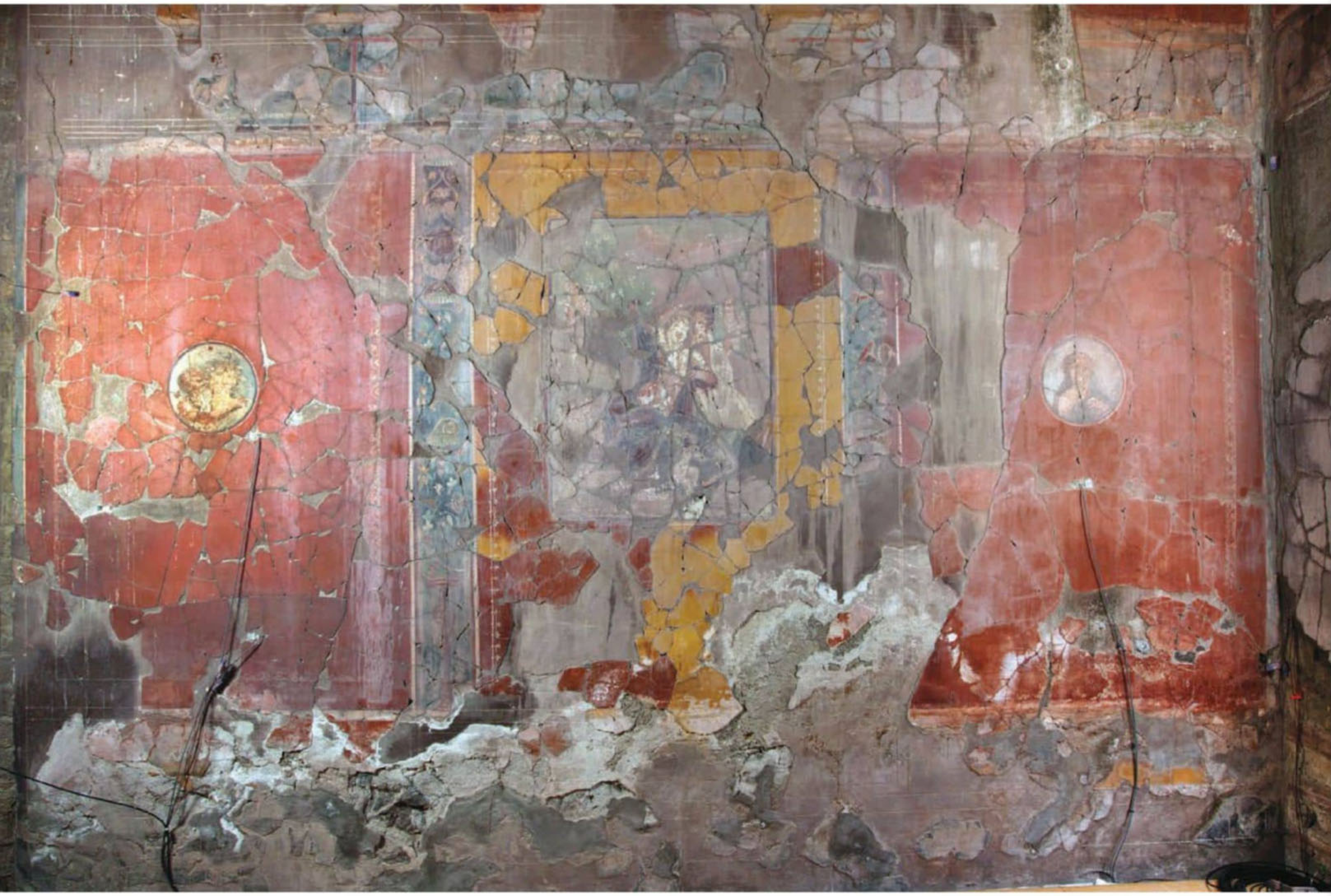
The House of the Bicentenary was identified early on as one of the buildings most in need of attention. Plans had long been drawn up for its complete restoration, but there had never been the funding for such an extensive project. In 2011, Getty Conservation Institute, in collaboration with the Italian heritage authorities and the Herculaneum Conservation Project, launched a pilot project to study and conserve the decorated architectural surfaces of the *tablinum*, given the significance of the wall-paintings and mosaic pavement in that room and their serious deterioration. The research carried out, →

the methods developed, and the materials employed in this focused field project were also developed to serve as a guide for the conservation of wall-paintings and mosaic pavements elsewhere at the site and in the region.

Studies of the paintings have shed light on how the reception room, destroyed and discoloured by the volcanic eruption, would once have appeared. The central scene painted on the east wall – showing Mars and Venus in an amorous embrace, with Cupid figures around them – illustrates the effects of the eruption. It was, along with much of the *tablinum*, recomposed from fragments found in the fill of the excavation. The yellow background of the painting has, in some places, converted to red. This is a phenomenon that occurs at high temperatures, when yellow ochre is calcined to red ochre. Some fragments would have preserved their original yellow colour, and others would have converted to red with exposure to high temperatures as elements of the building burned. For this reason, the *tablinum* still shows patches of yellow on the east wall, whereas the background colour of the west wall is entirely red. Scientific investigations carried out by the team showed that the scheme in the room originally would have had alternating panels with red and yellow backgrounds along the central portion of the wall, and a yellow background along the top, altering the colour scheme of the room dramatically.

In parallel with the conservation project for the *tablinum*, the Herculaneum Conservation Project team revised plans for the conservation of the entire house, implementing them with the heritage authority as resources became available. Indeed, from 2010 to 2019, roofs were repaired, drainage was redirected, unstable partition walls on the upper storey of the house were stabilised, and wall-paintings and the mosaic pavement in the atrium of the house began to be treated.

Herculaneum, and in particular the House of the Bicentenary, can now be viewed as a living laboratory for developing innovative conservation methods and materials, and for rethinking the approach to conservation in the context of the 20th-century excavation and restorations, now themselves considered historic. This process has been much enhanced by the creation of the Parco Archeologico di Ercolano, a dedicated heritage authority that only looks after Herculaneum. Working together with the →



BELOW From the 1980s, the House of the Bicentenary was closed to visitors due to structural issues and deferred maintenance. This led to severe deterioration of the wall paintings and mosaics. Salt activity from rising damp led to erosion and loss of paint along the base of the wall, and water infiltration from roof leaks left drips down the surface.

IMAGE: Scott Warren © J Paul Getty Trust with permission of Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

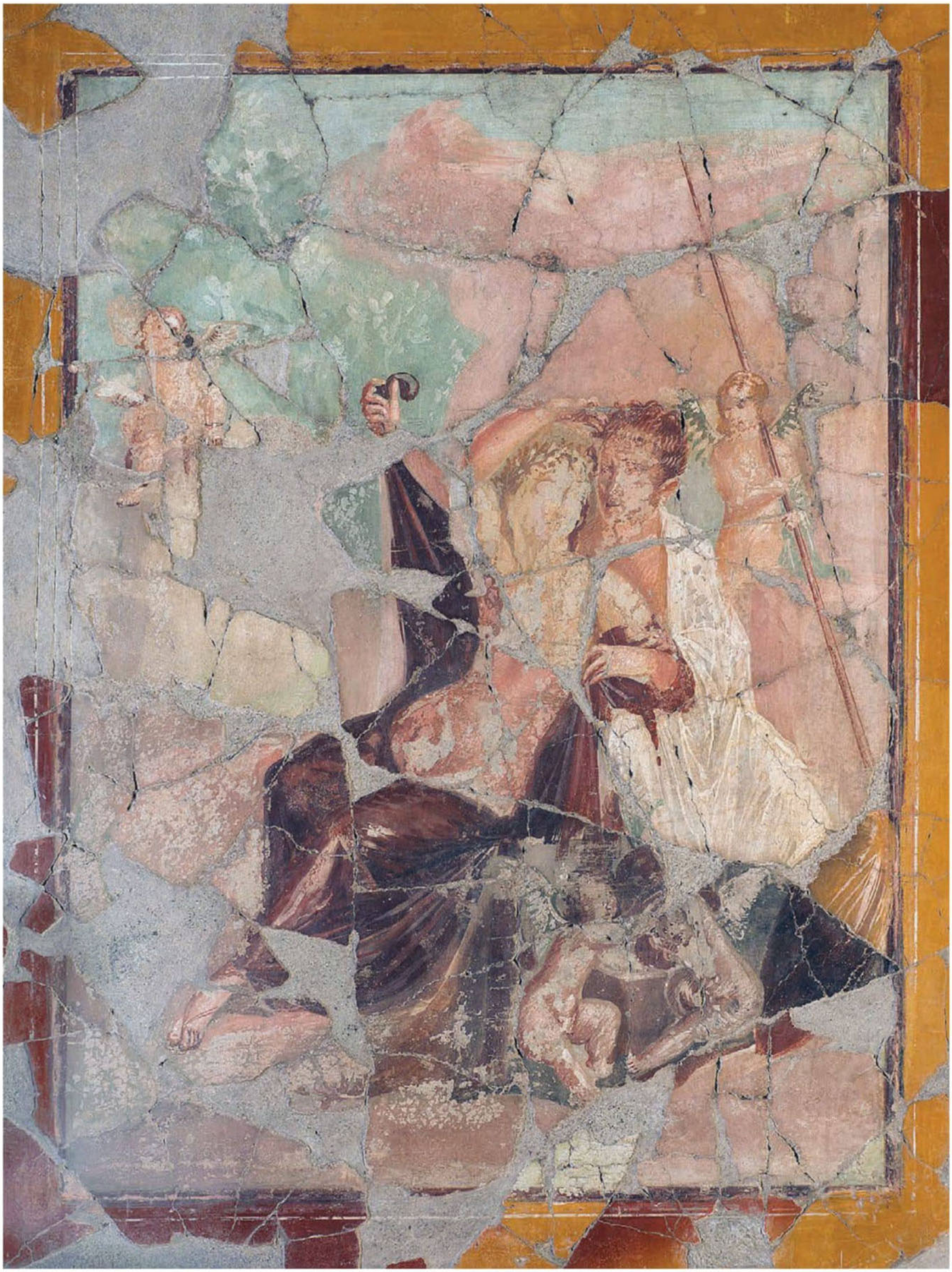
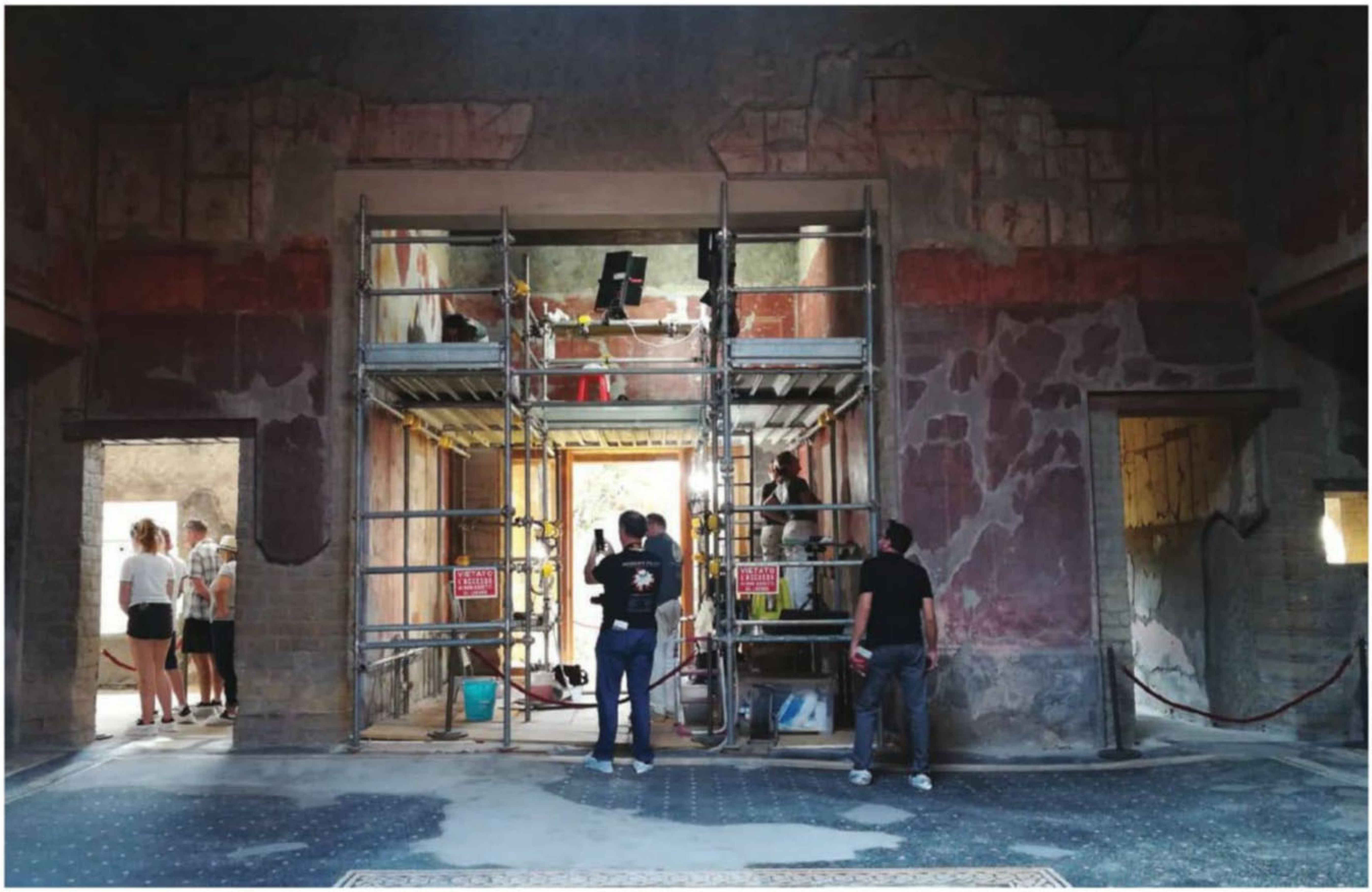


IMAGE: Laura Eboli © J Paul Getty Trust with permission of Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

ABOVE The central scene painted on the east wall of the house's reception room shows Mars and Venus in an amorous embrace, with Cupid figures around them.



ABOVE Since the House of the Bicentenary was opened to visitors in late 2019, it has become a living laboratory, where the public can view ongoing conservation work, and speak to conservators.

IMAGE: © Parco Archeologico di Ercolano

Herculaneum Conservation Project, Getty Conservation Institute and other partners, new projects are being initiated, events at the site are being programmed, and maintenance and conservation are being planned.

A new chapter in the life of the House of the Bicentenary began in 2019, when the conservation work had made it safe to reopen the site to the public. The challenge now turns to the continuous care of the house so that the problems of the past do not recur – regular maintenance may not sound the most exciting issue in archaeology, but it is precisely what will ensure the survival of these remarkable sites long into the future.

The House of the Bicentenary is a reminder of the importance of reopening closed buildings, both to provide public access to these spaces, and to ensure that they are monitored and cared for on a regular basis. In parallel to providing access to the house again, a participatory project has been under way to monitor the flow of visitors through the building, given the fragile mosaic pavements and the tight spaces covered with delicate wall-paintings, and reduce any damage they might potentially cause. For example, visitors have been given shoe covers to reduce their impact when walking over the original Roman pavements to explore the house. At the same time, the mosaic floors are periodically laser-scanned to measure changes and to inform future plans for both conservation and public access.

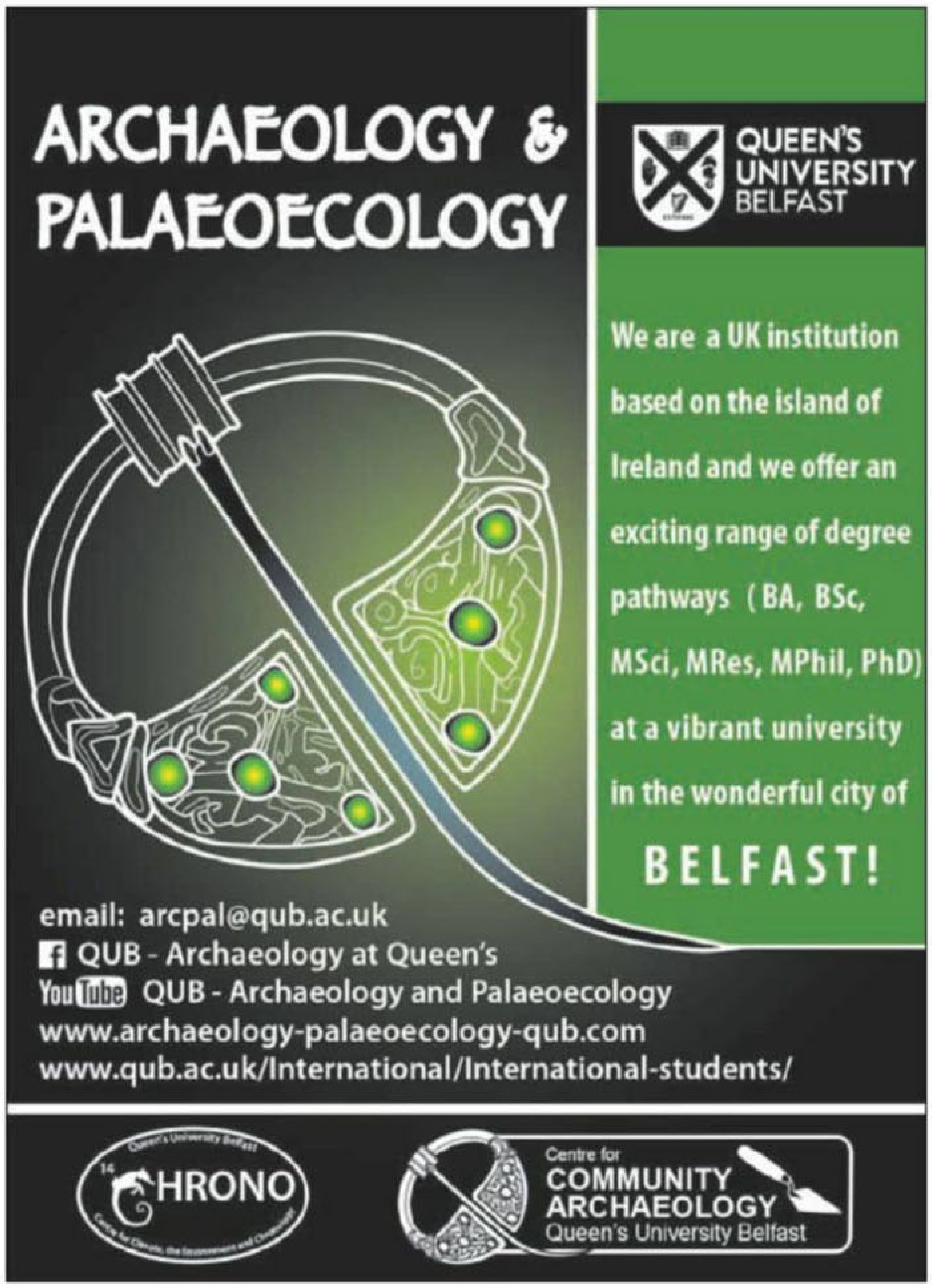
All these efforts apply not only to the House of the Bicentenary but to all the 40 Roman buildings that are currently being cared for at Herculaneum. Visitors are even able to see behind the scenes of the conservation work that is being done to return these special places to full public access. In this way, not only the heritage specialists but also members of the public are involved in the conservation, helping to build a shared and enriched understanding of Herculaneum's cultural values.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Herculaneum is normally open to visitors every day except Tuesday from 8.30am to 5pm. (As we go to press, Herculaneum is temporarily closed as part of Italy's COVID-19 measures.) From 15 March 2021, the summer opening times come into force, extending the closing time to 7.30pm. The House of the Bicentenary is open for you to explore when you visit. Details are provided on the official website at *https://ercolano.beniculturali.it/*.

A new book from Getty Publications provides a vivid account of the Roman town of Herculaneum, using the House of the Bicentenary as a case study to help understand the site's long history, exploration, and conservation: Sarah Court and Leslie Rainer, *Herculaneum and the House of the Bicentenary: history and heritage* (price $29.95, ISBN 978-1606066287).

The authors are grateful to their many colleagues, whose dedication and valuable contributions to the study and conservation of the House of the Bicentenary, and the site of Herculaneum in general, have been the key to the progress described in this feature. These include, among others, the staff of the Parco Archeologico di Ercolano and the twin authority for Pompeii, and the teams of specialists behind the significant results that partnerships with the Packard Humanities Institute and the Getty Conservation Institute have delivered. Special thanks to Sarah Court for her contributions to this feature.



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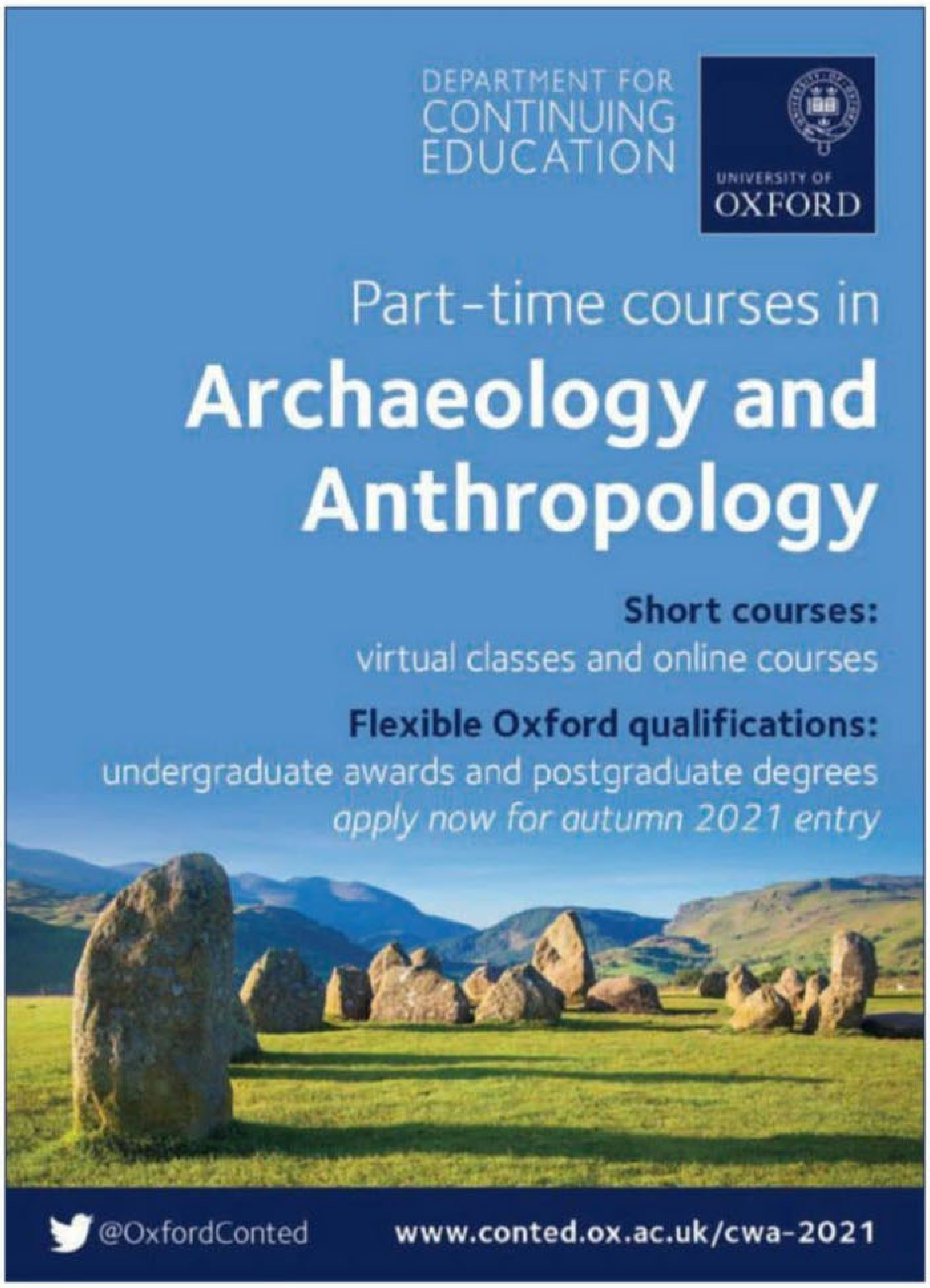

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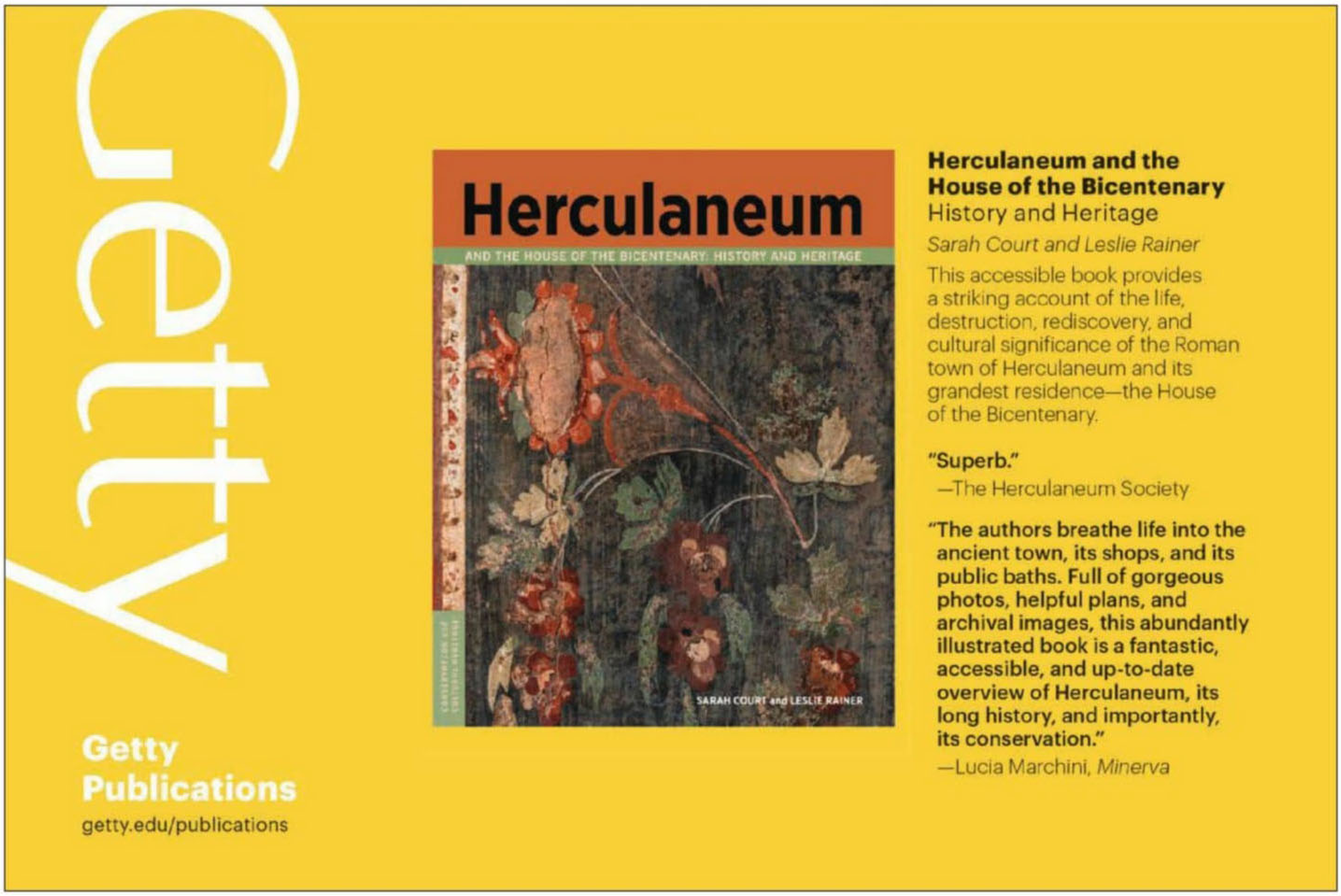

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Herculaneum and the House of the Bicentenary
History and Heritage
Sarah Court and Leslie Rainer

This accessible book provides a striking account of the life, destruction, rediscovery, and cultural significance of the Roman town of Herculaneum and its grandest residence—the House of the Bicentenary.

"Superb."
—The Herculaneum Society

"The authors breathe life into the ancient town, its shops, and its public baths. Full of gorgeous photos, helpful plans, and archival images, this abundantly illustrated book is a fantastic, accessible, and up-to-date overview of Herculaneum, its long history, and importantly, its conservation."
—Lucia Marchini, *Minerva*

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LEFT When archaeologists entered the tomb of Nefertari in 1904, they found it had already been looted. Within the queen's plundered tomb, they found shabtis, vases, pieces of furniture and faience, rope, sandals, an amulet, and parts of mummified legs. **RIGHT** Pendant in the shape of the lotus flower (a symbol of resurrection) from the tomb of the vizier Imhotep (QV46) in the Valley of the Queens. Gold and vitreous paste, reign of Thutmose I (*c.*1525-1516 BC). *Size: 2.5 x 2.5cm*

INTO THE VALLEY OF THE QUEENS

The Great Royal Wife of Ramesses II, Nefertari, was buried in one of the most spectacular tombs of Egypt's Valley of the Queens. Well-educated and well-travelled, Nefertari played a crucial part in the political life of the pharaoh, and her importance was reflected through her magnificently decorated tomb. Lucia Marchini speaks to Jennifer Casler Price to find out more.

In 1904, a group of archaeologists entered one of the largest tombs, and the most richly decorated, in Egypt's Valley of the Queens at Thebes. In this small wadi, a dried riverbed in the western Theban desert, Egyptians of the New Kingdom (c.1539-1075 BC) buried members of the royal family and high-ranking officials and courtiers. Nearly 100 tombs were cut into the rock of the main wadi, most with a series of rooms leading to a burial chamber, where an eminent figure was interred in a stone coffin.

It was in this wadi, known to the ancient Egyptians as Ta-Set-Neferu ('The Place of Beauty'), that a team from the Museo Egizio in Turin, Italy, was given licence to excavate by the Egyptian Antiquities Service. Their mission was to explore the valley systematically and publish their findings, but also to acquire artefacts for the museum, to fill in chronological gaps in its collection, while obtaining important contextual data that would be lacking for objects that had been acquired on the antiquities market in Egypt, fairly common practice for museums of the time. And so the director of the museum, Egyptologist Ernesto Schiaparelli, started digging in the valley with his team over three seasons between 1903 and 1905. They investigated several tombs, including those of Princess Ahmose, four children of Ramesses III, and Imhotep, the vizier under Thutmose I, but perhaps their most significant discovery was in the 1904 expedition, when, led to the right place by a local guide, they excavated the great tomb of one of Egypt's great queens: Nefertari.

As Schiaparelli wrote in his report on the work of the Italian Archaeological Mission:

> *On the lintel, on either side of the rising sun that was shown flanked by two sacred eyes and adored by the two sisters Isis and Nephthys, we read the name of the famous spouse of Ramesses II. The name of the Queen was also provided by the inscriptions that were engraved and painted on the jambs of the door.* →

ALL IMAGES: Museo Egizio, Turin, Italy

OPPOSITE Statue of Ramesses II, seated between Amun and Mut, from the Temple of Amun at Karnak. Granite, reign of Ramesses II (*c.*1279-1213 BC). *Size: 119 x 113.5 x 94cm*
LEFT *Djed*-pillar amulet from the Tomb of Nefertari. Gilt wood and vitreous paste, reign of Ramesses II (*c.*1279-1213 BC). *Size: 12.7 x 5 x 1.3cm*
ABOVE Sandals made of palm leaves from the Tomb of Nefertari. Reign of Ramesses II (*c.*1279-1213 BC). *Size: 28.8 x 10.2cm; estimated US size 9 or UK size 7*

> *'The noble of lineage, the greatest of favours, the lady of goodness, of gentleness and love, the sovereign of the South and the North, the deceased spouse, justified, lady (of the Two Lands) Nefertari Merenmut, true of voice before the Great God...'*
>
> *From two galleries, going down a few steps carved between two pillars, one could reach the lower part of the room, which was also the deepest part of the tomb [...] Various large fragments of the sarcophagus lid, of beautiful pink granite, were still lying there in the middle of the room...*

Finds from the tomb (QV66) were taken to the Museo Egizio, and some of the material from these excavations, and other artefacts from the museum, is now on view at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas as part of a touring exhibition, *Queen Nefertari's Egypt,* introducing both the queen and life in New Kingdom Egypt.

Nefertari Meritmut (or Merenmut) – meaning 'beautiful companion' (*nefer*, or 'beautiful', appears in many queen's names, including that of Nefertiti) and 'beloved of Mut' – was the first of the Great Royal Wives of Ramesses II (r. 1279-1213 BC), the third pharaoh of the 19th Dynasty. Little is known about her background, but she was so well-regarded by the pharaoh that she was celebrated – along with the goddess Hathor – in a temple next to his own in Abu Simbel, and when she died around 1255 BC she was honoured with a sumptuous tomb (and, with a burial chamber around 85m^2 in area, a spacious one), providing her with everything a noble queen could need in the afterlife.

Jennifer Casler Price, curator of Asian, African, and Ancient American Art at the Kimbell, says, 'People knew they'd likely find her tomb in the Valley of the Queens. Archaeologists had a sense of how important she was from inscriptions and evidence elsewhere, but it was unexpected to see just how big this tomb was, and how resplendent, particularly the tomb murals on every surface.

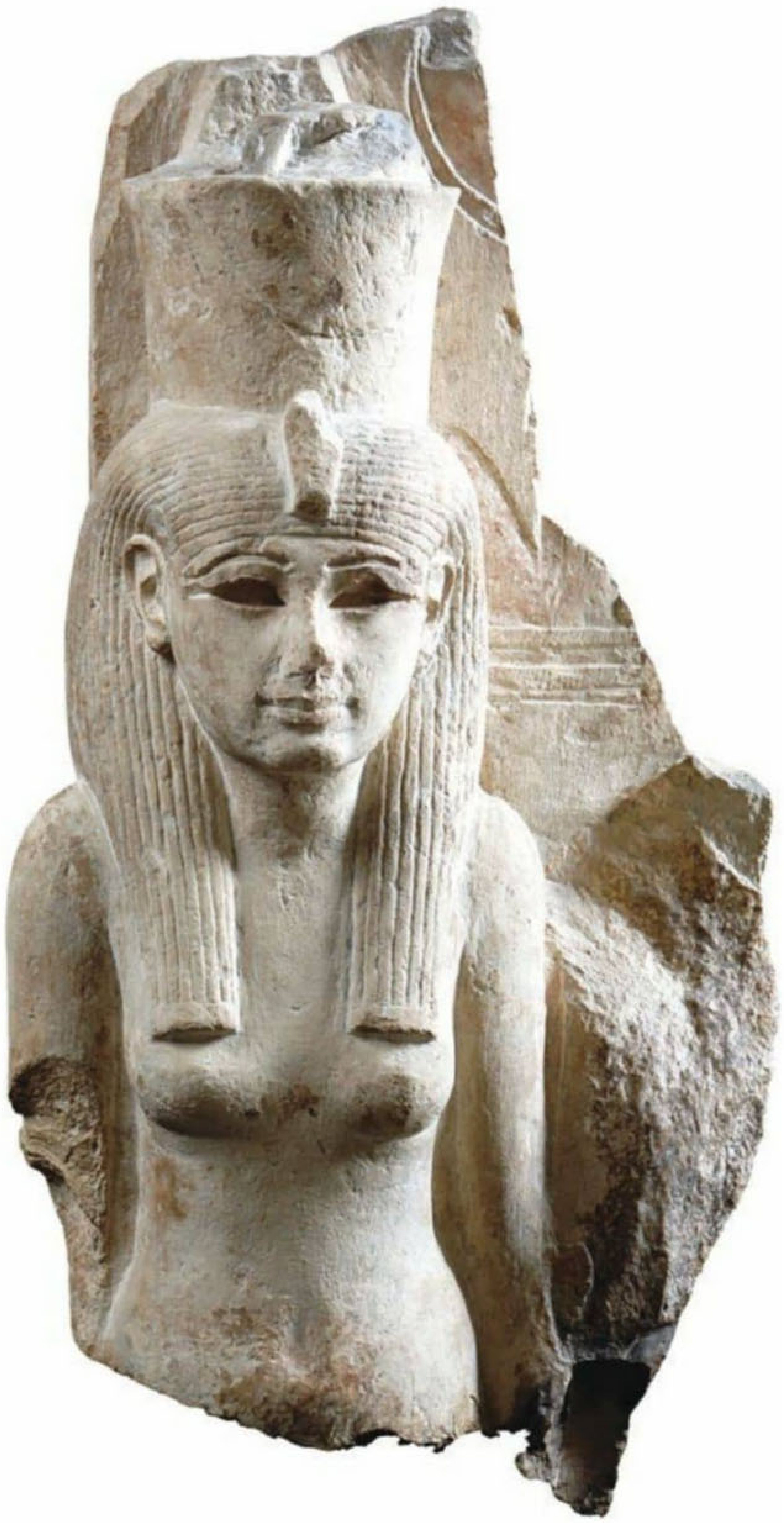
'The tomb had been looted in antiquity – which isn't unusual, and happens elsewhere – but it was still impressive. They were impressed by the sheer scale of the granite sarcophagus lid found inside. There was a tiny bit of a gilded coffin-lid too, which suggests she had a fully gilded coffin.'

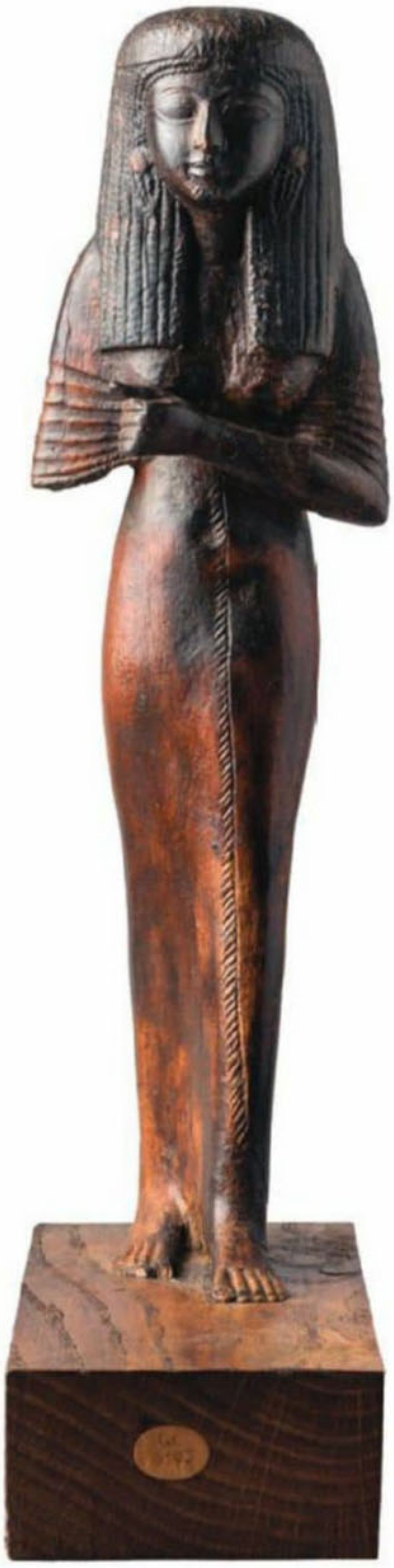
Indeed, Schiaparelli's account, quoted in the exhibition catalogue, relates his team's enthusiastic reaction:

> *Although the funerary equipment was very poor, nevertheless the Mission rejoiced for the discovery of the tomb, which is one of the most important results obtained. It belongs to one of the most famed Egyptian queens, and it is exceptionally beautiful, both for its architectural structure and for the reliefs and inscriptions that covered the walls. [...]*
>
> *Despite some effaced zones, in the parts where the decorations were intact, which we could consolidate, the size of the figures, the brightness of the colours, the magnificence and the purity of style (close to the most significant examples of the Egyptian art of the first period of the 18th Dynasty) make this tomb one of the most outstanding monuments in the Theban necropolis. It compares with the most relevant tombs in the Valley of the Kings, maybe not because of its size, but for sure by reason of its shapely proportions and of its artistic worth. The difference between this tomb and the others in the Valley of the Queens (and all the tombs) consists in the inspiration that creates and connects the scenes painted on the walls.*

Nefertari appears in painting all over the tomb, giving offerings to the gods and being welcomed by them. The brightly coloured scenes depict various steps the queen's spirit must take on her journey through the Duat (the underworld) and into the afterlife, as described in the *Book of the Dead*, the ancient funerary texts containing spells and rituals to aid and protect the deceased.

Rainwater that had entered between the rock structure and the painted plaster meant that some walls were in a bad state of preservation, so – after archaeologists opened the tomb in 1904 – Francesco Ballerini, Schiaparelli's assistant, carried out an initial →





ABOVE LEFT Limestone statue of the goddess Mut. Early 19th Dynasty (c.1292-1250 BC). *Size: 53.3 x 28 x 22.2cm*
ABOVE Wooden statue of a lady, probably from Thebes. 19th-20th Dynasty (c.1292-1075 BC). *Size: 43.2 x 22.9 x 10.2cm*

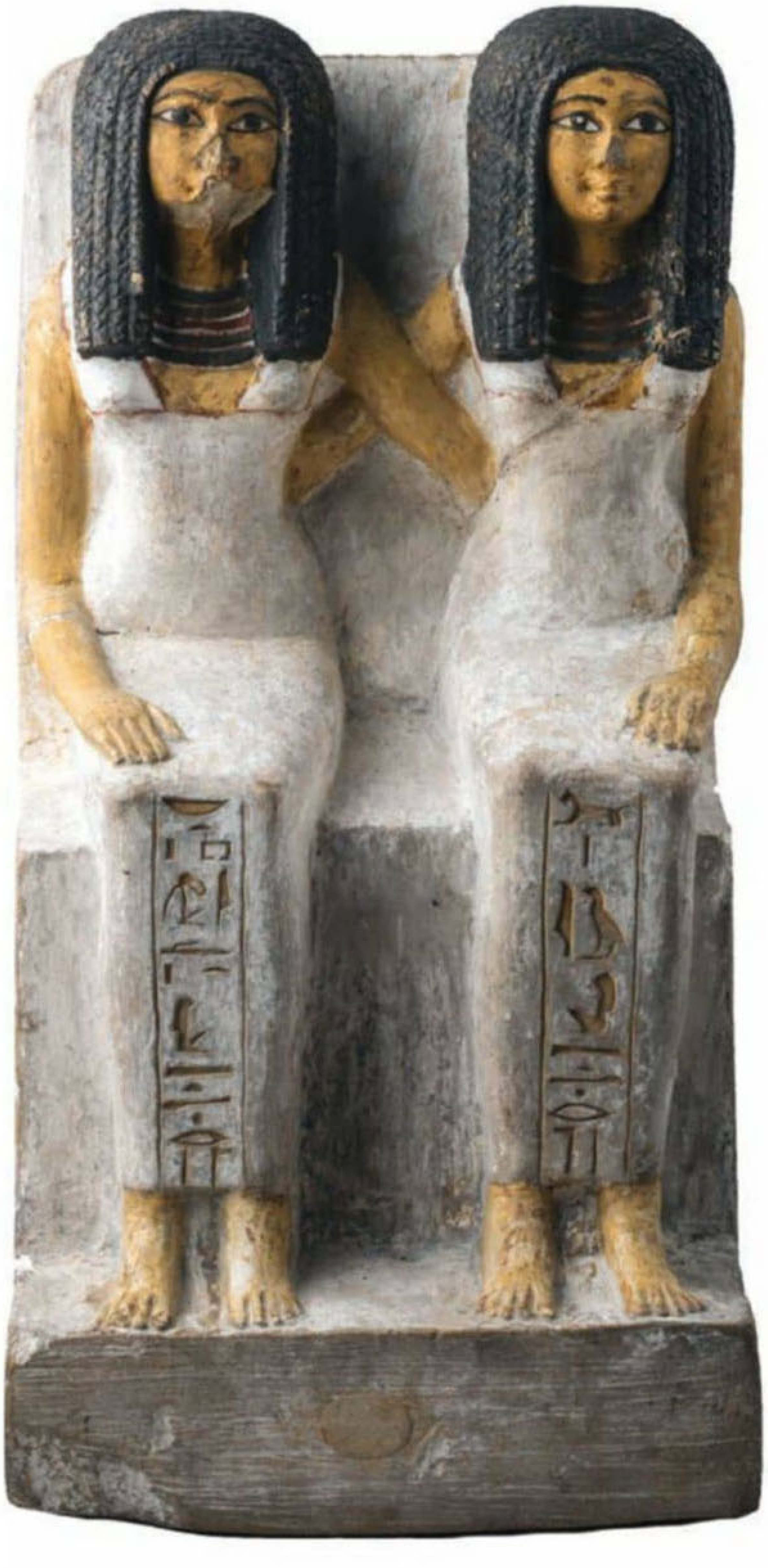
restoration. The astonishing level of decoration was meticulously recorded in photography by the expedition. Ballerini prepared an impressively detailed model of the tomb, which was completed after his death in 1910 by colleagues Edoardo Baglione and Michelangelo Pizzio based on his copious drawings, photographs and notes. Decades later, in the 1980s, the tomb underwent another major restoration, but it is closed today.

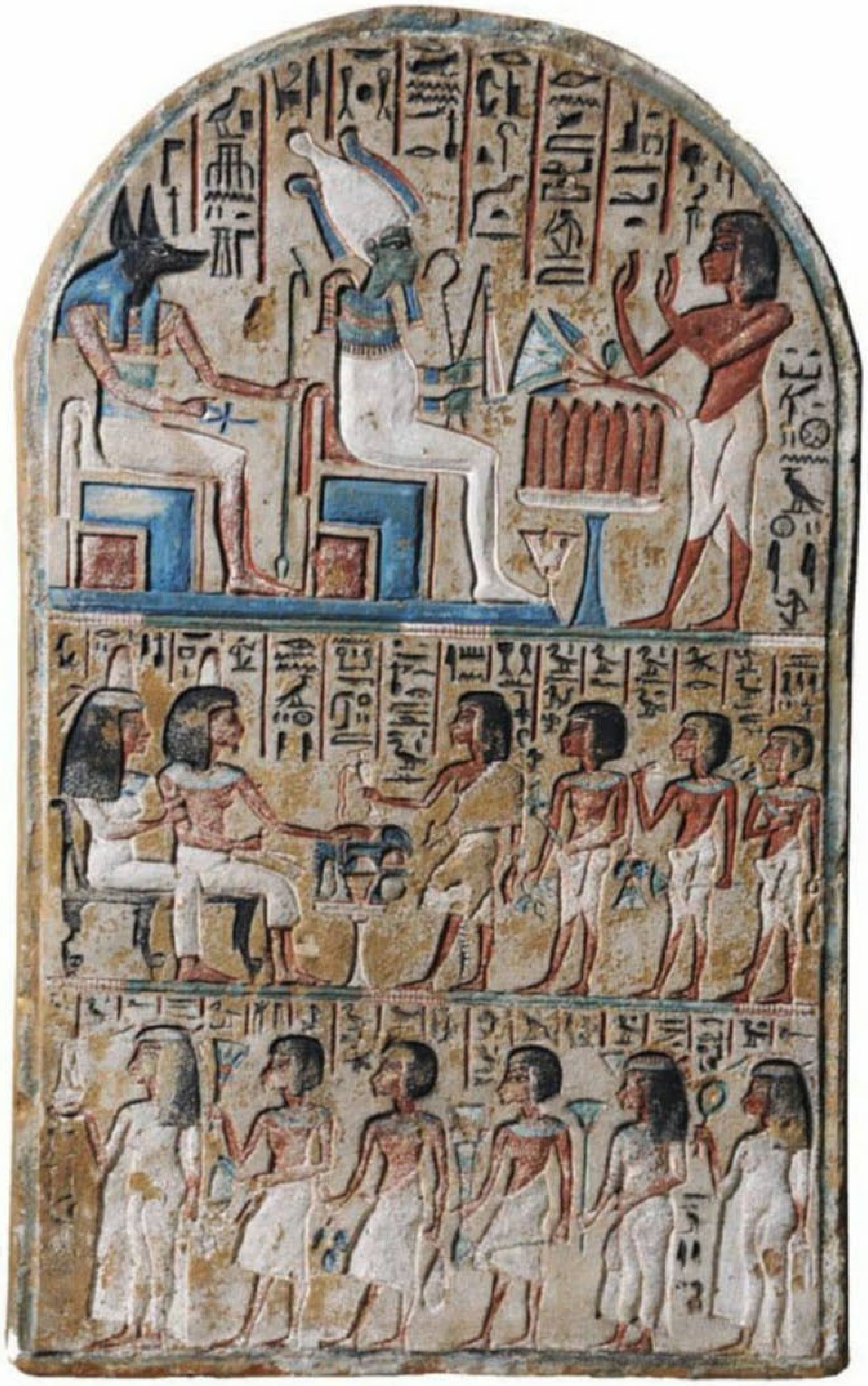
Although the objects found in the looted tomb were few in number, those that remained – like the fragment of the gilded coffin – still reveal the exceptional skill and artistry that went into preparing and furnishing these royal burials.

The finds include 34 wooden shabtis, covered in black resin and inscribed with the name of the queen. Her name also appears on the back of an exquisite gilded wood and blue vitreous paste *djed*-pillar amulet. This type of amulet, representing the spine of Osiris, the god of death and the afterlife, was a symbol of stability and eternal life. They appear painted on walls around the tomb too. The object was found hidden in a niche, and it may once have stood on one of the four 'magical bricks' (none of which have survived from QV66) that were placed in the four corners of the burial chamber for protection. The *Book of the Dead* tells us that there is a spell to be said over a *djed*-pillar amulet set on a brick.

Another name from within the tomb may give a clue about Nefertari's family background. Various fragments of furniture were discovered in the tomb, some of which may have been reused. Among this assemblage was a faience knob, likely from some furniture, inscribed with the gold cartouche of Aye, a former pharaoh of the late 18th Dynasty. This was perhaps included in the tomb as Aye was an ancestor of Nefertari (although there is no way of knowing for certain) and so it may be that she was of royal blood.

Other objects hint at what Nefertari may have worn. Casler Price says, 'One thing I find touching from Nefertari's tomb is a pair of sandals. They're beautiful and in amazing condition. Imagine when Schiaparelli found them! They're 3,000 years old and it's amazing that they can travel for the exhibition. What's great is that in one tomb mural, Nefertari is sitting at a *senet* board – *senet* is a game





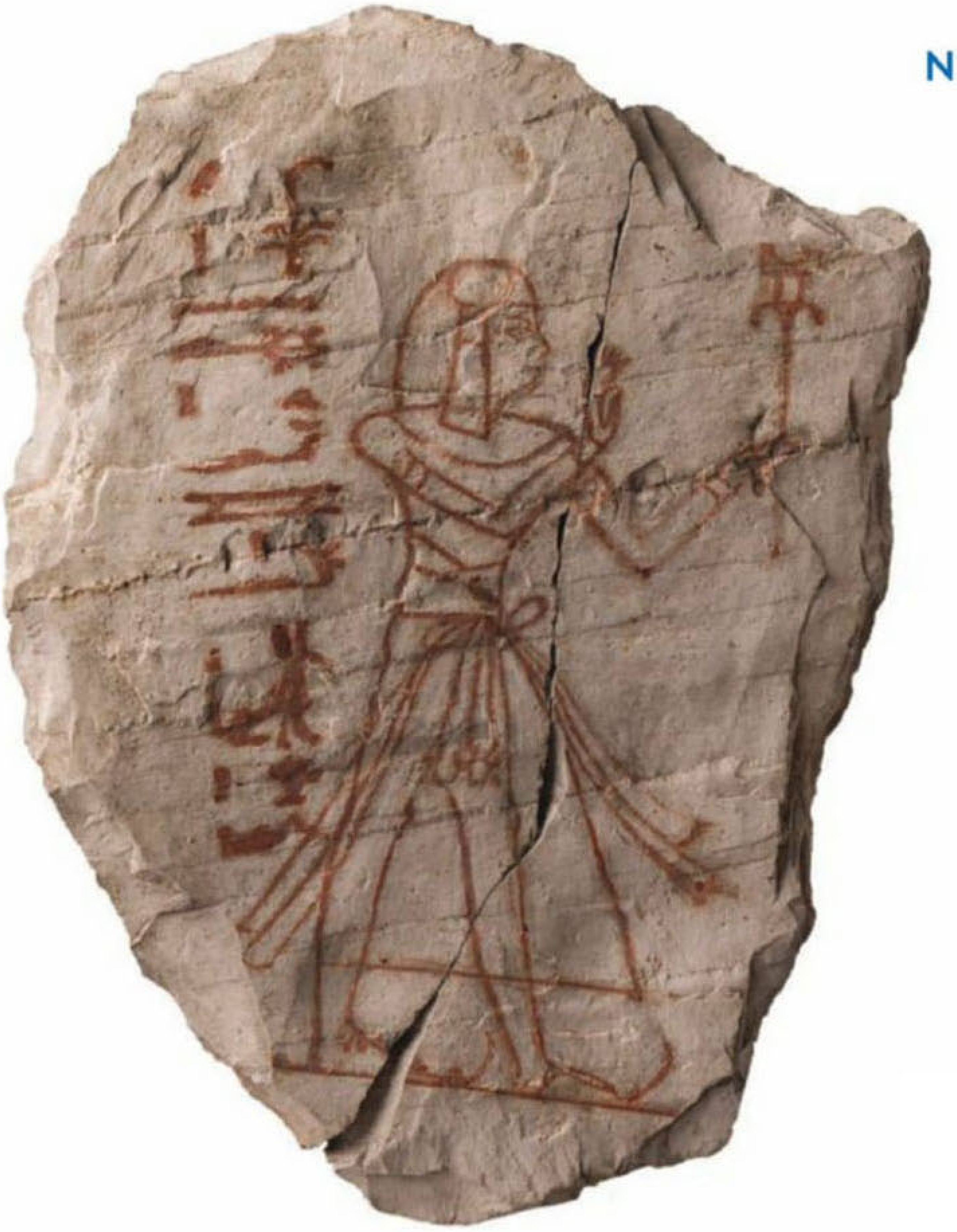
ABOVE Statue of two women, Idet and Ruiu, probably from the Theban Necropolis. Idet is called the 'lady of the house' and is given more prominence, as she is seated on the right. There is no title for Ruiu, and we do not know the relationship between the two women. Early 18th Dynasty (*c.*1430-1390 BC). *Size: 36 x 44.5 x 20cm*
ABOVE RIGHT Stela of the craftsman Nakhi, probably from Deir el-Medina. In the top register, Nakhi makes offerings to Osiris and Anubis, gods of the Underworld. Below, he and his wife Nefertiti receive an offering from their son. Painted sandstone, late 18th Dynasty (*c.*1300 BC). *Size: 100 x 63 x 15cm*

about the afterlife, everything's about the afterlife – playing the game and wearing the sandals.' These sandals are made of woven palm leaves, and are of a type dating to the late-18th and 19th Dynasties, so they may have belonged to the queen herself. An even more direct connection to Nefertari, perhaps, comes from a pair of mummified knees that are the only human remains left in the looted tomb. Based on analysis of the legs and the mummification method, it is possible that these could represent the last mortal remains of Nefertari.

Nefertari, as a queen and as the favourite wife of a powerful pharaoh, had an exceptional position in society. Like other queens, she was the earthly embodiment of goddesses, a counterpart to the pharaoh who was linked to Amun-Ra, the creator god and king of the heavens. Nefertari was associated with the celestial goddess of fertility Hathor, with whom she shared a temple at Abu Simbel, and the mother goddess, and dutiful wife of Amun, Mut, who embodied the ideal woman. Part of her name (Meritmut) even tells us that she is 'Beloved of Mut'.

As seen through her tomb and temple, Nefertari was also beloved of Ramesses II. Of his some 100 children, we know that at least six were Nefertari's (Ramesses II had other wives), but her status came from more than the usual biological duties expected of a queen.

Even among most other queens, Nefertari was exceptional. Her name appears on many monuments, hinting at her importance, and, beyond the usual symbolic power of the goddess-like queens, she played an active part in politics, assisting her husband with diplomacy (she corresponded, for example, with the Hittites in far-off Anatolia) and other royal duties. Casler Price explains, 'When Ramesses II was crowned, she went with him as he travelled to see all his people. So she was meeting people beyond her normal realm, the women's palace. One reason that he took her was that she was not only his favourite wife, but could also read and write, and help him. This involvement makes her like other great queens, like Hatshepsut and, much later, Cleopatra. →



LEFT Wooden statuette of Queen Ahmose-Nefertari, from Deir el-Medina. 18th Dynasty (*c.*1539-1292 BC). *Size: 38 x 11.4 x 7cm*
RIGHT Ostracon depicting a prince, from the Valley of the Queens. Limestone with red paint, reign of Ramesses III (*c.*1186-1155 BC). *Size: 19.5 x 14 x 2cm*

'This level of learning was very unusual. Most women were not literate. Even most queens and royal women were not literate. They were in the women's palace, leading sheltered and secluded lives.'

Outside the royal sphere, what do we know about life for other women? In the New Kingdom, women had some independence, particularly economic independence, and certain rights that meant they could stand in court and have their own businesses in fields that included farming and textile manufacture.

Through the archaeological record, we have glimpses of individual women – both royal and not – through the objects they owned that were inscribed with their names, boxes for cosmetics or clothing, kohl pots that were placed in tombs. They are depicted also in finely worked sculptures from tombs and funerary stelae.

The artisans who built Nefertari's exceptional tomb and others in the Valley of the Queens lived and worked in Deir el-Medina, a village also excavated by Schiaparelli and the Italian team. As well as preparing the lavish rock-cut tombs for royalty, they prepared burials for people within their own community. The scale and the showiness may not be the same, but these are still expert artisans. From Deir el-Medina, the funerary stelae show deceased craftsmen, often along with their wives, worshipping gods and receiving offerings from their families.

Finds from Schiaparelli's excavations shed light on the domestic lives of people in the village and on how they carried out their work. Well-preserved wooden scribal palettes were found, along with the fine reed brushes used, while hammers bear the marks of where they repeatedly struck against a chisel as workers hewed out tombs from the rock. 'There are also ostraca,' says Casler Price. 'They're limestone fragments, chips that come off the stone you're carving. They're your sketchbooks. Artisans were making preparatory sketches, then threw them away. They're as small as three inches. Schiaparelli found thousands of these ostraca, and thankfully he didn't just throw them away! I love the delicacy and surety of the line, the skill. To me, it's just mind-blowing – and so personal.'

It was another queen – another Nefertari, in fact – who was instrumental in setting up Deir el-Medina. Ahmose-Nefertari (d.1495 BC) was the first queen of the 18th Dynasty and of the New Kingdom. She was the Great Royal Wife of pharaoh Ahmose I and used her wealth to fund religious projects and festivals. After the death of the pharaoh, Ahmose-Nefertari may have served as regent to her son Amenhotep I while he was still young. It was with this son that she founded the village of Deir el-Medina, and for five centuries she was worshipped by its inhabitants as a local goddess. Her son was also deified and honoured, and these two royal and godly patrons appear on some of the funerary stelae from the village, receiving offerings from the deceased.

Through the rediscovery of the spectacular tombs like Nefertari's and the village of Deir el-Medina itself, the work of the artisans who worshiped its royal founders has lived on, and with it, the legacies of the great queens of the New Kingdom.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Queen Nefertari's Egypt runs at Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, until 14 March 2021. It is organised by the Museo Egizio in Turin, and StArt, in collaboration with the Kimbell Art Museum. The exhibition will travel to Portland Art Museum as *Queen Nefertari: Eternal Egypt* (9 October 2021 to 16 January 2022).

A catalogue by Christian Greco with Simon Connor, Paolo del Vesco, Alessia Fassona, and Federico Poole is published by Museo Egizio and the Kimbell Art Museum (price $16.95, ISBN 978-0912804576). It is available from the Kimbell. See *www.kimbellart.org* for more information.

CUZCO

PHOTO: Dumbarton Oaks Museum, Washington, DC

'CENTRE AND HEAD OF ALL THE LAND'

Cuzco was the heart of the vast Inca empire, but all changed in the 16th century when the capital was conquered by Spanish invaders. Michael J Schreffler investigates the Inca city, and how it went from the centre of one empire to the periphery of another.

By the early 16th century, the Inca empire was the largest power in the pre-Columbian Americas. Its territory spanned more than 5,000km, stretching from the environs of Quito in Ecuador to Santiago in Chile. In Quechua, the language of the Inca, it was known as Tahuantinsuyu, the Realm of Four Parts. An extensive system of roads connected this expansive realm, facilitating communication throughout the empire and providing links among its imperial administrative centres. One of its main arteries led travellers through the Andes, crossing mountain passes at heights of up to 6,000m, and transverse routes connected it to a parallel track running along the Pacific coast.

The place where the four realms converged, and the conceptual origin point for all of these roads, was Cuzco in Peru: the sacred centre and capital of the empire. Its densely built core was bounded by two streams – the Saphi and Tullumayo – that descended from springs to the north-west of the city. It is often claimed that Cuzco was designed in the shape of a feline, with the hilltop known as Sacsahuamán constituting its head and the area between the Saphi and Tullumayo forming its body, but it is more likely that the city came to be regarded that way only later, in the era of Spanish colonial rule. Inca Cuzco consisted of a number of large stone compounds, some of them surrounded with perimeter walls, and some of them serving as expansive palaces for Inca rulers and their kin. Estimates vary, but the scale of its infrastructure and available resources suggest Cuzco may have housed a population of 15,000 to 20,000 in the time of the Inca, with perhaps 100,000 or more in surrounding areas.

Centuries of political, cultural, and seismic upheaval have wrought significant changes on the Inca capital, but remnants of its temples, palaces, and plazas remain visible today. Flanking the narrow street of Loreto are walls built with the signature mortarless stonework of Inca royal architecture, its andesite blocks carved and set in courses like a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. At the church of Santo Domingo, a massive curving stone wall constructed by Inca masons in the 15th century stands beneath the external wall of the sanctuary. Its dark polished stones set in horizontal courses and its bulky curvature contrast with the rougher masonry of the church, whose Solomonic (twisting) columns and arches spring from their pedestals to support latticework screens in dark wood. In the adjacent Dominican monastery, Inca walls in the main cloister allow visitors to examine the stonework as well as the canted walls and trapezoidal doorways, windows, and niches that characterise Inca royal architecture throughout the empire. →

OPPOSITE Detail of a 15th- or early 16th-century Inca *uncu* (tunic), perhaps worn by the Sapa Inca. It is woven from camelid fibre and cotton, and decorated with *tocapu* patterns with four-part motifs that reflect the Inca worldview of four parts in one.

BELOW Inca masonry is clearly visible in the streets of Cuzco, like here on Calle Loreto. The wall on the right was part of the Inca compound Amarucancha, which later became the residence of the first lieutenant-governor of Spanish Cuzco.

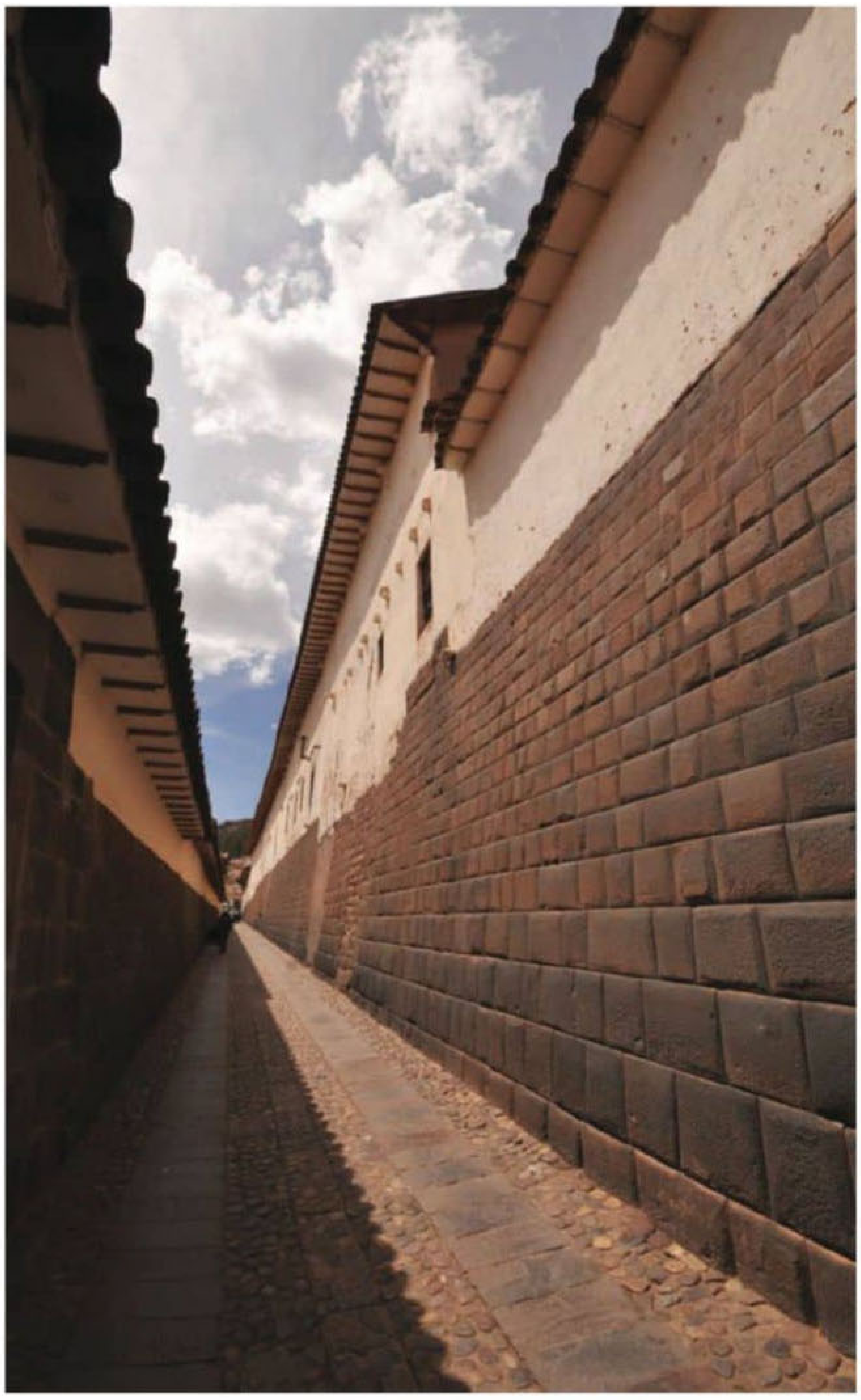


PHOTO: Andy Krakovski

> "Cuzco would accommodate the Inca king and the mummies of his predecessors".

The remains of Inca buildings in Cuzco together with the findings of archaeological investigation provide valuable information about the plan of the city and the design of its buildings. Augmenting this data are accounts recorded in the 16th century by Spaniards like Juan de Betanzos, who had become fluent in Quechua and collected information on Inca history from the indigenous elders of Cuzco. They told him that the city had its origins in ancient times when the founders of the Inca royal dynasty – Manco Cápac and his sister-wife Mama Ocllo – chose Cuzco as the place where they would live. They arrived bearing vessels made of gold in many shapes and sizes and wearing garments of the finest cloth, and they built a house near the place where the Saphi and Tullumayo converged. Many generations later, the elders said, the Inca ruler named Pachacuti (d. 1471 or 1472) built the House of the Sun, a temple dedicated to a solar deity on the site of the house the primordial couple had built.

Pachacuti's name, Betanzos notes, means 'change in time', and indeed the physical changes he is said to have made to Cuzco in the 15th century signalled the beginning of a new era. Its stony built-environment would accommodate the Inca king, the mummies of his predecessors, members of the royal families and provincial administrators, and a host of servants. The House of the Sun stood as the most important shrine in Cuzco, and it also marked the nexus of the two sectors of the city, one of them called *hanan* (upper), and the other *hurin* (lower). Inhabiting these sectors were two branches of the Inca royal lineage, with those residing in *hanan* Cuzco being

BELOW The foundations of rectangular rooms, probably storehouses, at Sacsahuamán, a fortified hilltop site overlooking the modern city of Cuzco.

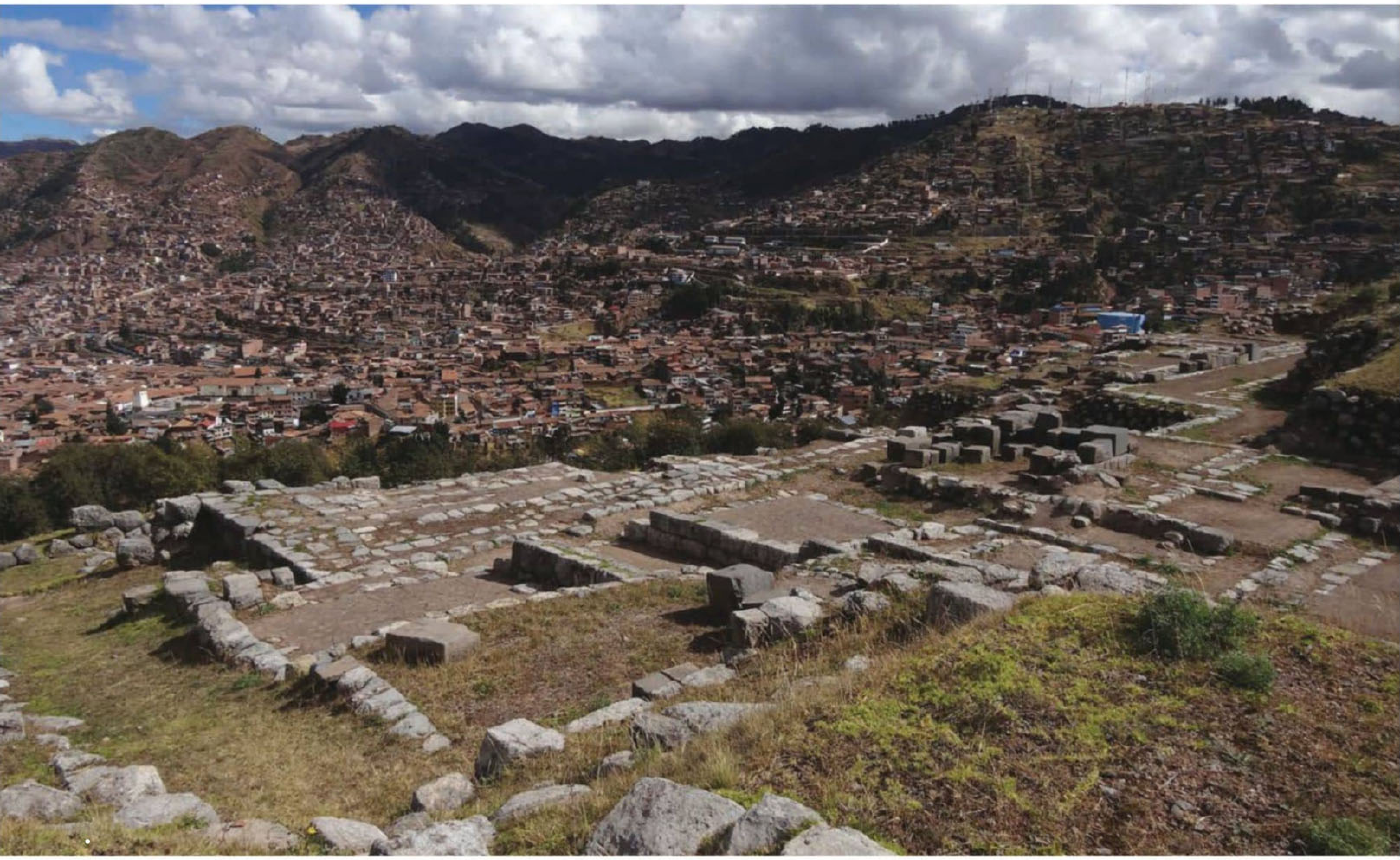


PHOTO: Scott DuPre Mills

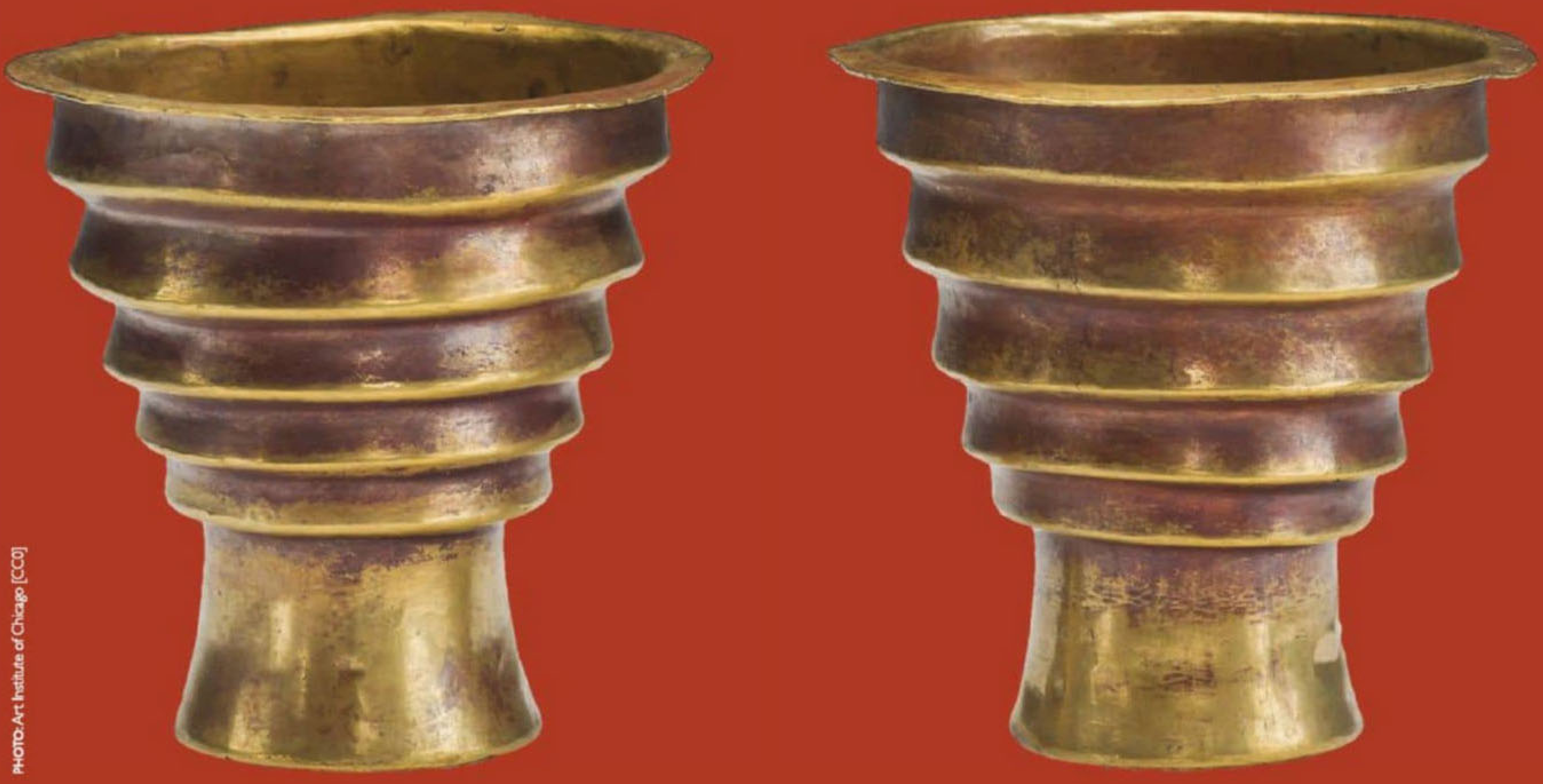


PHOTO: Art Institute of Chicago [CC0]

of higher status than their counterparts in *hurin* Cuzco. This conceptualisation of space and its inhabitants in terms of 'upper' and 'lower' extended into the surrounding villages and throughout the entire empire. It enabled imperial administration, providing a basis for the reciprocal acts that structured trade, labour, and ritual practice.

Cuzco's built environment, the rituals that took place there, and an ensemble of finely crafted objects gave shape to the history of the Inca and their worldview. The gold and silver vessels known as *aquillas* were always made in pairs and were central to ritual practice and everyday life. Filled with the fermented corn beverage called *chicha*, they were used in ritual toasting and drinking to solidify relationships between individuals and social groups. Like the division of Cuzco into the sectors of *hanan* and *hurin*, the *aquillas* and their associated rituals affirmed the interdependence and mutual esteem that were essential to survival and prosperity in an empire of diverse ecosystems, each of them the source of distinctive raw materials and resources.

The exquisite textiles produced in Cuzco and elsewhere in the empire, too, embody ideas and values central to Inca and their world. Standardised patterns for men's garments, such as the black-and-white chequerboard tunic, articulate concepts like complementary relationships between and integration of different parts in visual and formal terms. At the same time, the stepped pattern forming the tunic's yoke calls to mind the verticality of the natural landscape of the Andes →

ABOVE A pair of gold and copper alloy drinking vessels called *aquillas*, 15th-16th century.

BELOW A 16th-century *uncu* of a standard design worn by Inca men, consisting of a black-and-white chequerboard and a red yoke.

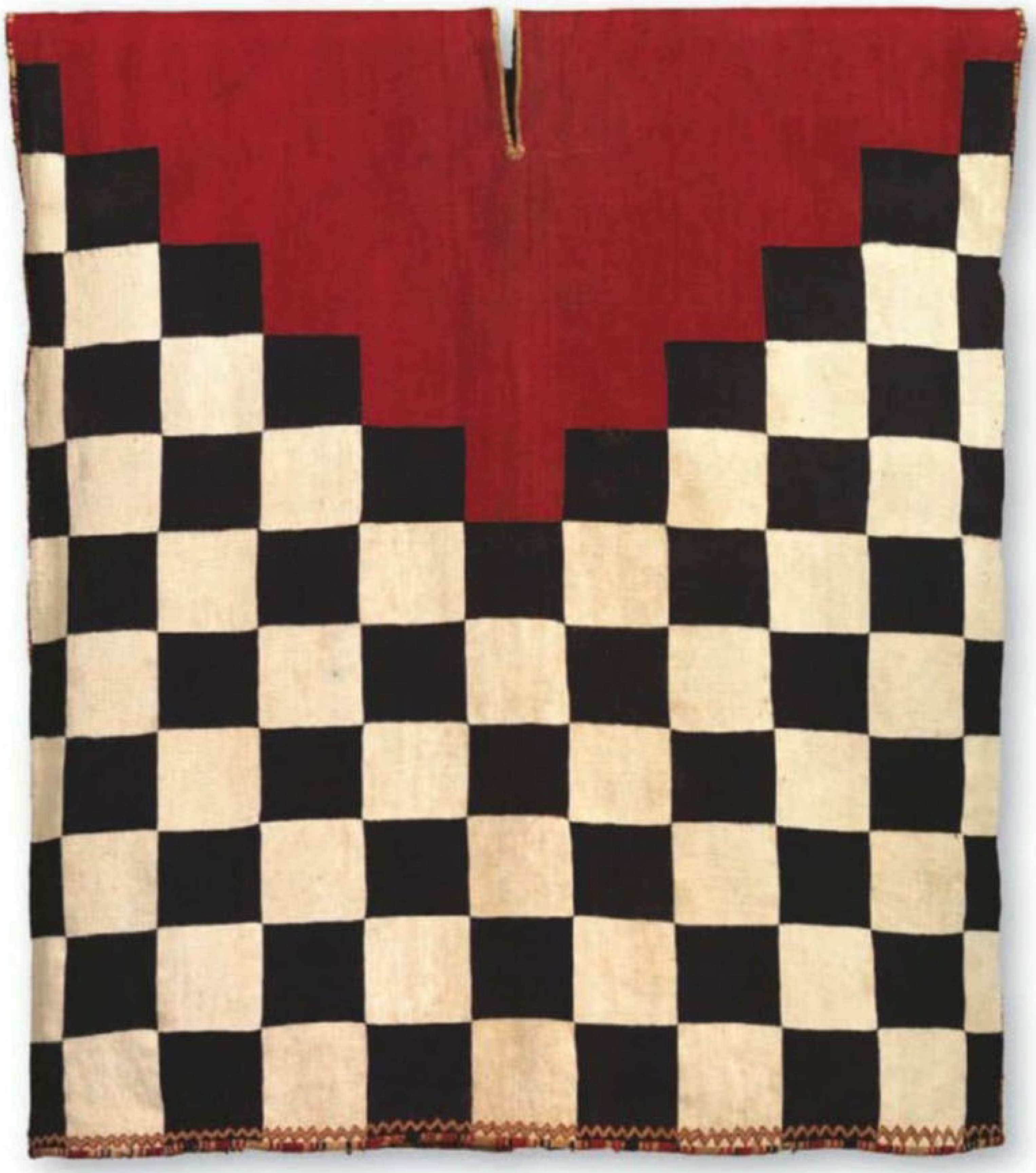


PHOTO: Metropolitan Museum of Art [CC0]

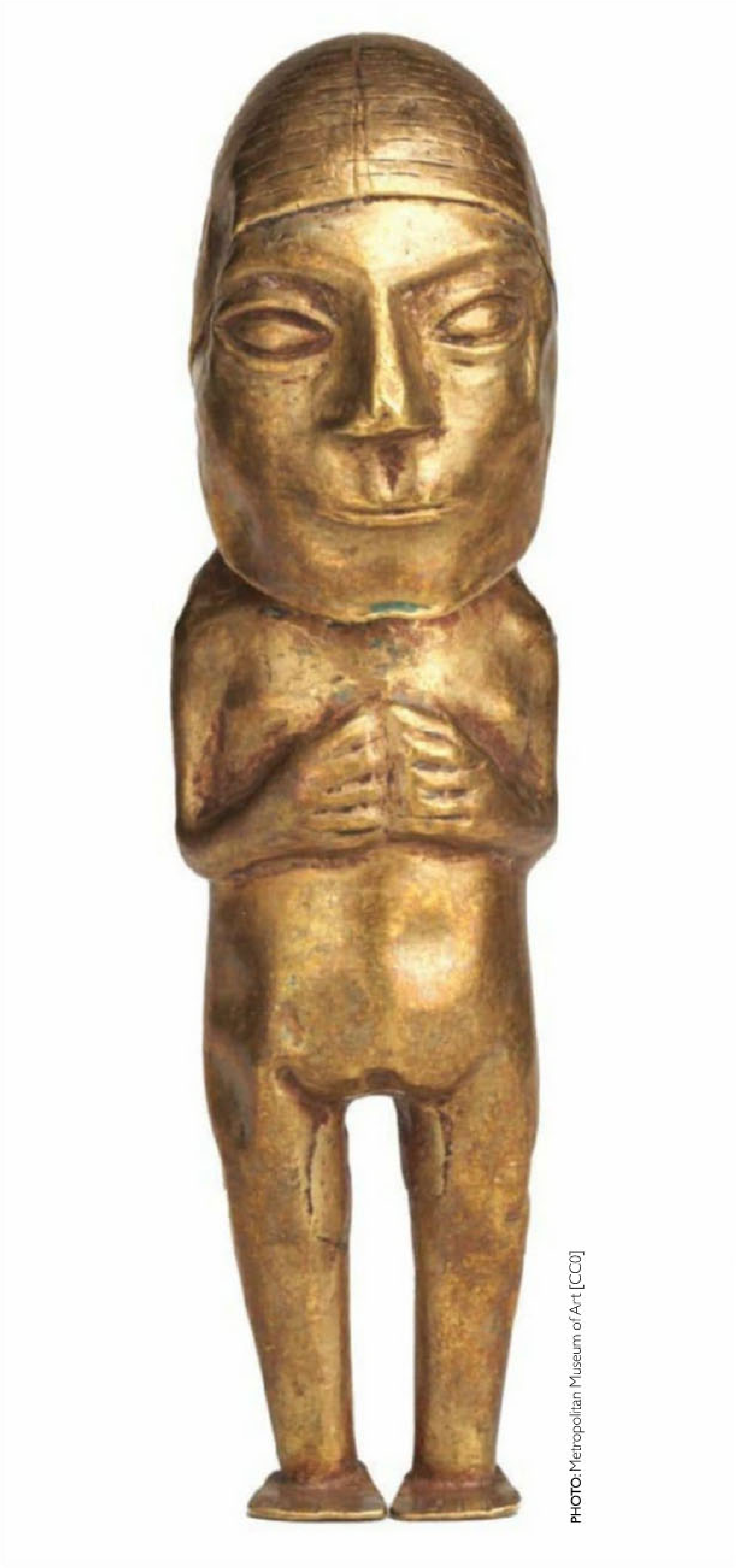


PHOTO: Metropolitan Museum of Art [CC0]

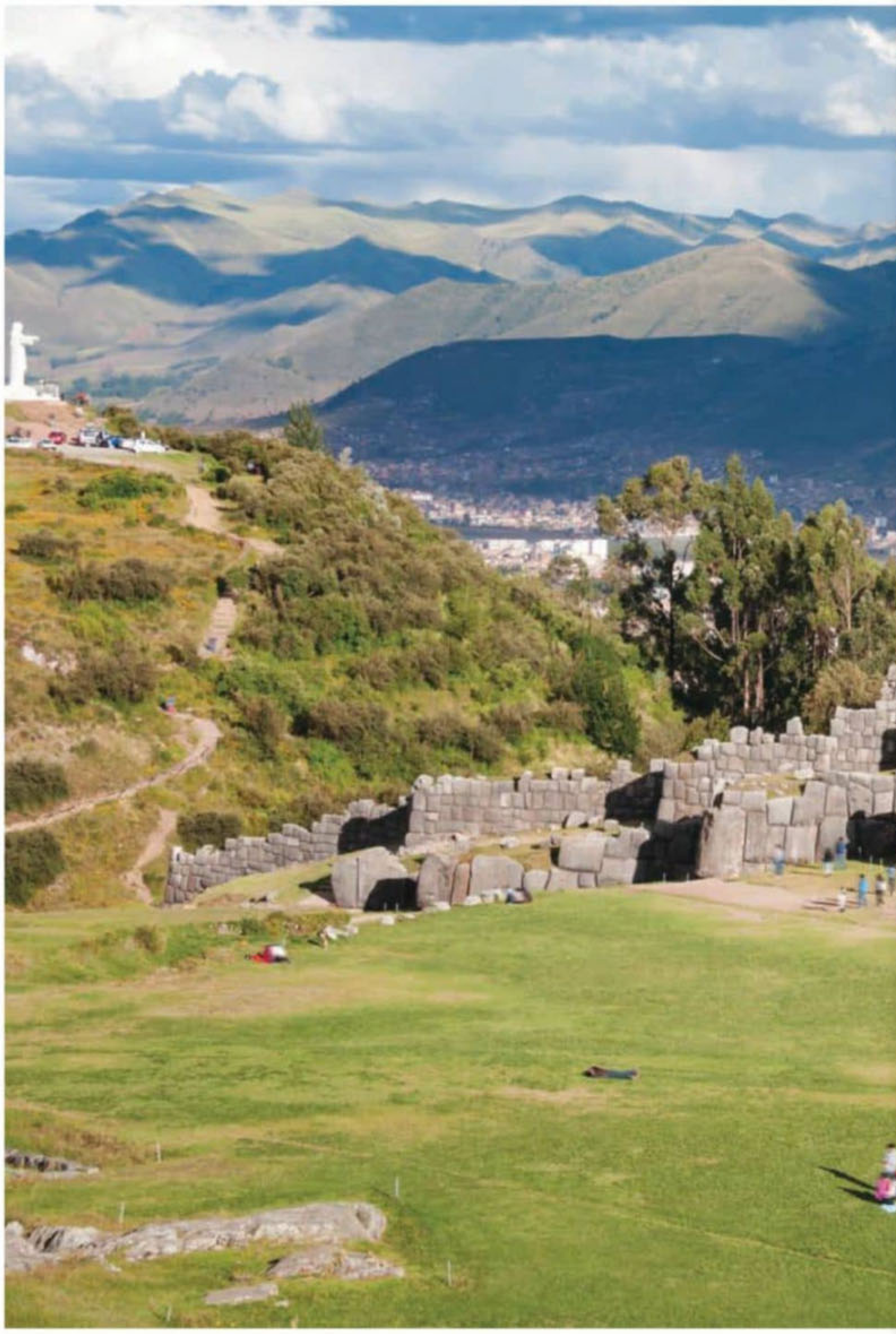


PHOTO: T Bradford

ABOVE Gold figurines, like this 6cm-high one, have been found as offerings right across the Inca Empire. Similar examples of human figurines, and figurines of camelids, in gold and silver have been found at Sacsahuamán.
ABOVE RIGHT The huge zigzag terrace walls made of massive blocks of stone at Sacsahuamán impressed early Spanish chroniclers, who described the complex as a fortress.

> "After collecting an enormous ransom in gold and silver, they killed Atahualpa in July 1533".

and its transformation into stepped terraces suitable for growing foodstuffs such as corn, potatoes, and coca, whose leaves were highly valued, and which grew only in limited ecological settings. The tunic's materials and the technology of weaving itself are similarly meaningful. Made of camelid fibres, often in combination with cotton ones, garments like these integrated materials from the highlands and the coast. Through intensive and specialised labour, the interwoven weft (horizontal) and warp (vertical) threads create a unified field, even as one of those directions takes precedence, an effect visible on close inspection.

A remarkable tunic in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC, expresses the principles of Inca cosmography with technical virtuosity and visual splendour. Many of its repeating geometric patterns, known as *tocapu*, are forms with four parts, encapsulating the idea of Tahuantinsuyu with great force and simplicity. Others evoke the concepts of complementarity and reciprocity, an effect exemplified by the 'Inka key' motif, which features a diagonal line dividing the rectilinear space into two halves, each of which features a small square. Miniature versions of the

standardised black-and-white chequerboard tunic are also scattered throughout the composition, emphasising the sets of similar patterns that make up the whole.

Embodying Inca conceptions of space, distinction, and integration, the all-over *tocapu* tunic may have been worn by the Inca king, the Sapa Inca, the flesh-and-blood embodiment of the empire. It is tempting to think that Atahualpa, who ruled for slightly more than a year, wore such a garment when he entered the plaza in the administrative centre of Cajamarca to meet Francisco Pizarro, a Spaniard from Trujillo, Extremadura, in November 1532.

By the time of that meeting, Pizarro (c.1478-1541) and his band of fortune-seekers had been in the Andes for about six months, travelling along the Inca roads, stopping at administrative centres and way-stations, and establishing strategic alliances with native communities. In Cajamarca, Pizarro's secretary Francisco de Xerez wrote a report on the encounter with Atahualpa, noting that some of the Inca king's attendants were dressed 'in a livery of different colours, like squares on a chess board'. The meeting quickly devolved into a skirmish, in which the Spaniards captured and imprisoned Atahualpa. After collecting an enormous ransom in gold and silver, some of it in the form of *aquillas*, they killed him in July 1533.

Four months later, Pizarro, his company of Spaniards, and their native allies, servants, and slaves entered Cuzco. In March 1534, Pizarro performed the civic ritual known as the Act of Foundation, the ceremony that brought Spanish colonial Cuzco into being, even as the appearance of the Inca capital was altered, only slightly. Standing in the plaza, he set up a wooden *picota*, a pillar of justice that would serve as a site of criminal punishment. He designated an adjacent Inca festival hall as the city's church and stipulated that the new Spanish settlers would be assigned lots on which they would build their houses.

The construction of houses, however, would not occur for at least another decade. Instead, the Spaniards adapted existing structures to new uses. Indeed, they quickly came to understand the esteem in which the indigenous people of Cuzco held its buildings. The compounds surrounding the plaza, for example, had housed the Inca kings, their mummies, and their kin groups. The House of the Sun, now on the periphery of the Spanish colonial city, was the →

most important shrine in the Inca capital and the conceptual centre of a sacred landscape that extended throughout the entire empire. The Spaniards' occupation of these and other buildings led to a siege of the city by indigenous forces headed by Manco Inca (d. 1544), a descendant of the Inca kings. In April 1536, he and his followers brought a series of relentless and destructive attacks on Cuzco and its environs. They weaponised the city's infrastructure, redirecting water channels to cause flooding, erecting barricades, and digging ditches in the streets to impede passage on horseback.

Much of the armed combat, however, took place at Sacsahuamán, the enormous hilltop complex overlooking the city that the Spanish regarded as a fortress. Some sectors of Sacsahuamán are no longer intact, but a trio of gargantuan stepped walls remain standing, tracing a zigzag path across the site some 400m (1,300ft) in length. The Spaniards admired the stonework of those walls and wrote about them, comparing them to works of Roman architecture like the aqueduct of Segovia and the city walls of Tarragona. They were similarly impressed by a tower with three concentric circular walls that – like the monumental zigzag walls – rose in steps. At its base was a vast complex of storehouses, some of them filled with textiles, and others with stone weapons. The footings of the tower and storehouses are still visible at Sacsahuamán, and excavations there have uncovered metal tools, animal bones and teeth, human and llama figurines in silver, gold, and *Spondylus* shell, and pottery. Some of these objects were found in association with the 80 human burials found scattered throughout the site, many of them in the zigzag terraces. The buried assemblages, archaeologists suggest, may have been offerings made as part of the dedication of these structures, a practice noted elsewhere in Cuzco as well as at other Inca sites.

As the conflict continued, Manco Inca established his base at Ollantaytambo, a mountainside complex some 60km (37 miles) north-west of Cuzco. Built with seemingly endless terraces in the signature stonework of royal Inca architecture, Ollantaytambo – like the more famous Machu Picchu – is believed to have been a royal estate established in the 15th century for Pachacuti, and additional construction there may have taken place in the early 16th century. When the Spanish attempted to attack Manco and his warriors there, they were forced to retreat. Soon afterwards, the victorious Manco Inca set out for the forests of Vilcabamba, eventually settling at a place called Vitcos.

The year-long siege of Cuzco devastated the town's buildings and streets and ushered in a decade of political instability. Rival factions of Spaniards in the late 1530s and 1540s brought shifting alliances and a string of men vying for the right to govern. This period saw the emergence of a new spatial order and civic hierarchy in Peru as Lima, the coastal City of Kings, supplanted Cuzco as the seat of governance. By the mid-1540s, however, relative stability in Cuzco and a large indigenous labour force made changes to its

BELOW The south-west façade and balcony of the church of Santo Domingo, which combines Inca stonework (the curved wall) and European styles of architecture prevalent in the 16th-18th centuries.

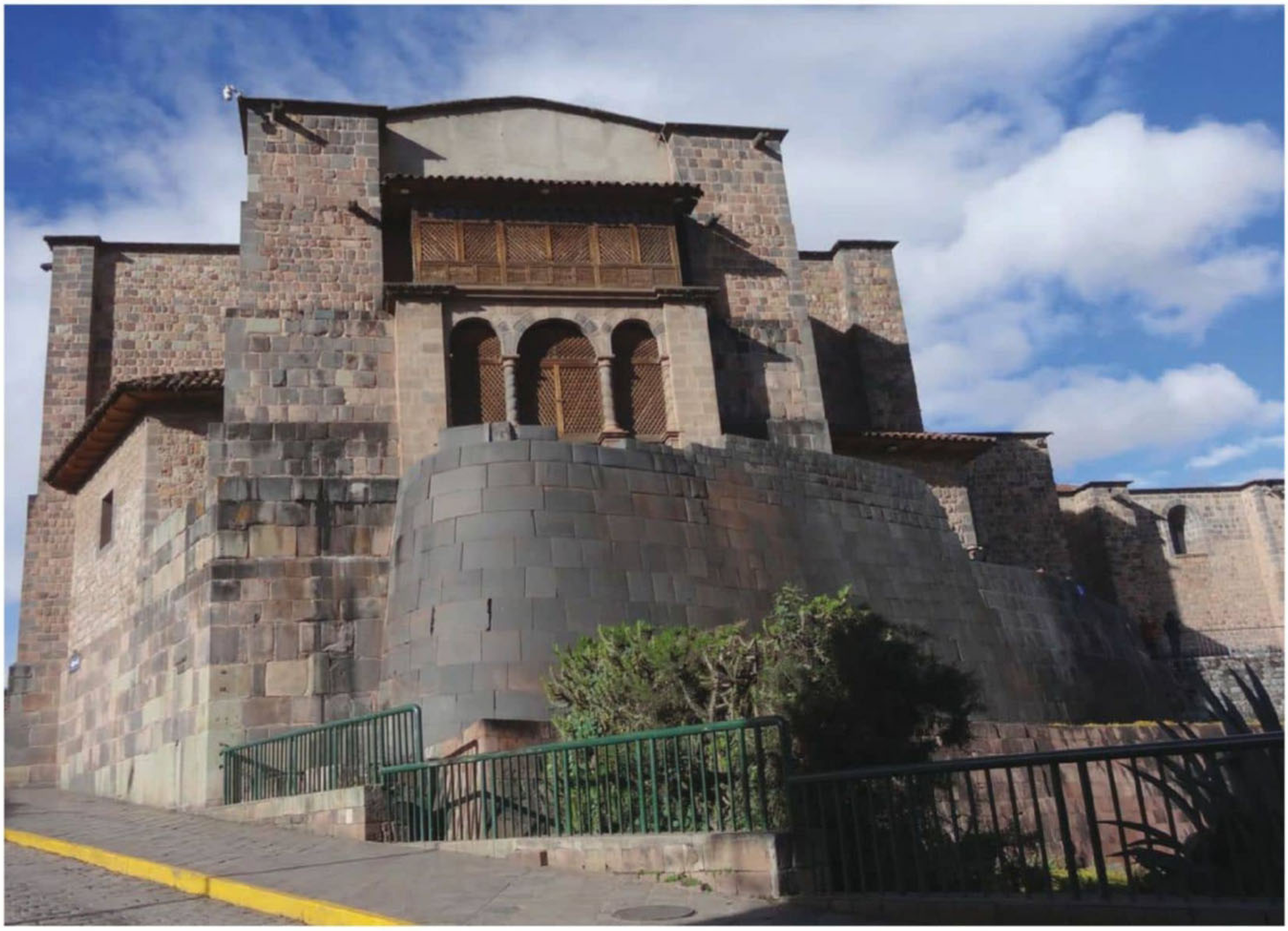


PHOTO: Scott DuPre Mills

PHOTO: Jesús Escobar

ABOVE The main cloister at the monastery of Santo Domingo was built with arcades and galleries framing what was once a patio within the House of the Sun.

infrastructure possible. A row of shops with porticos was constructed in the main plaza where the canalised Saphi ran through it, reducing the size of the plaza by about half. The town council insisted that the arcade fronting the shops be uniform in its materials and size, a practice whose consequences remain visible on the plaza of Cuzco today. The tower and storehouses at Sacsahuamán were dismantled, their stones used in construction projects in the city; portals were adorned with classicising ornament and heraldic symbols; and the House of the Sun was adapted for use as a church and monastery for the Dominican Order.

By 1551, when Juan de Betanzos was recording oral histories recounted by the indigenous elders of Cuzco, the city was a very different place than it had been just 20 years earlier. Now part of the kingdoms of the Spanish Crown, it was on the periphery of an empire rather than the centre of one, an effect illustrated by world maps from this era. But coexisting with this colonial view of the world was another one, documented most vividly in the account of Titu Cusi Yupanqui (1529–1571), the son of Manco Inca. Writing from the forests of Vilcabamba around 1570, he referred to Cuzco as the 'centre and head of all the land'. 'Since it is in the middle,' he wrote, 'my ancestors who were there called their lineage "lords of Tahuantinsuyu", which means lords of the four parts of the world, for they thought it certain that there was no more world than this.'

FURTHER READING

Cuzco: Incas, Spaniards, and the making of a colonial city
by Michael J Schreffler has recently been published in hardback by Yale University Press (price: £45/$70, ISBN: 978-0300218114).

PUSHING BOUNDARIES

When the Etruscans expanded to the south and the vast plains of Campania, they found a land of cultural connections and confrontations, as luxurious grave goods found across the region reveal. An exhibition at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples sheds light on these ancient Italians at the frontier. Paolo Giulierini, director of the museum, is our guide.

According to the ancient scholar Servius, the city of Capua, in what is now the southern Italian region of Campania, was founded after a hawk or falcon was sighted. The Etruscan word for this augural sign, the hawk or falcon, is *capys*, and, while we only know this word from Servius' gloss, its mark can still be seen in the city's name today. The Etruscans – or Rasenna, as they called themselves – were an ancient, pre-Roman civilisation dating back to c.900 BC. They controlled swathes of central Italy, ancient Etruria, encompassing the modern regions of Tuscany, Lazio, and Umbria. In time, they expanded north beyond Etruria, and also pushed south into the fertile fields of Campania, settling at centres like Capua.

Fine bronze vessels called *lebeti*, decorated with sculpted figures of warriors, have been found in the tombs of Capua's necropolis. Examples of these extraordinary objects, testimony to the magnificence of this centre in the Archaic age (600-480 BC), have been in the British Museum since the 19th century. Also preserved abroad, this time in the museums of Berlin, is an artefact that demonstrates the city's involvement with the Etruscan religion: the exceptional Tabula Capuana, a religious calendar inscribed – using the Etruscan language – on a terracotta tile.

Around the great urban hub of Capua, there is plenty of archaeological evidence for a lively Etruscan presence in Campania, confirmation of the ancient authors, who even wrote of a 'dodecapolis', a league of 12 cities, following the model of the dodecapolis in Etruria. An exhibition in the Palestra Grande in Pompeii used some of this evidence to explore the relationships between elite Campanians, Etruscans, and Greeks and the Etruscan presence in this pre-Roman centre – and now, at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN), we present *The Etruscans and the MANN* (see 'Further information' on p.47). Our exhibition begins with a video in which a hawk flies over Etruscan territory, from Lazio down to Campania, letting visitors see from above the most important sites of this civilisation which, from the 8th to the 5th centuries BC, controlled the great plains of the region.

Evidence for the first phase of Etruscan activity in the area comes from grave goods from the Campanian sites of Carinaro e Gricignano di Aversa, Suessula, and Pontecagnano, showing the progressive control of the valleys that lead into the plains and along the Tyrrhenian Sea. At Pontecagnano, more than 9,000 burials have been excavated over the last fifty years. Owing to the quality of the objects found in the graves of the necropolis, some have been called 'princely' burials. These offer an insight into the aristocracy of the period between the late 8th century and the end of the 7th century BC, when a vast commercial network (with Campania as an important junction on the Italian peninsula) was established across the Mediterranean and objects that show clear influences from the eastern Mediterranean appear. The grave goods from these and other sites also allow us to appreciate the introduction of elements from the Villanovan culture.

Later, we can see a process of osmosis with the Greek culture of the nearby centres of Ischia, the island in the Bay of Naples where Greeks from Euboea settled to trade with the mainland Etruscans, and Cumae, an ancient Greek colony also founded by Euboeans. With these Greek sites nearby, the plains of Campania were fertile ground not just for agriculture, but also cultural exchange. Such processes lead to the birth of the first great metropolises in Etruscan Campania, such as Capua. →

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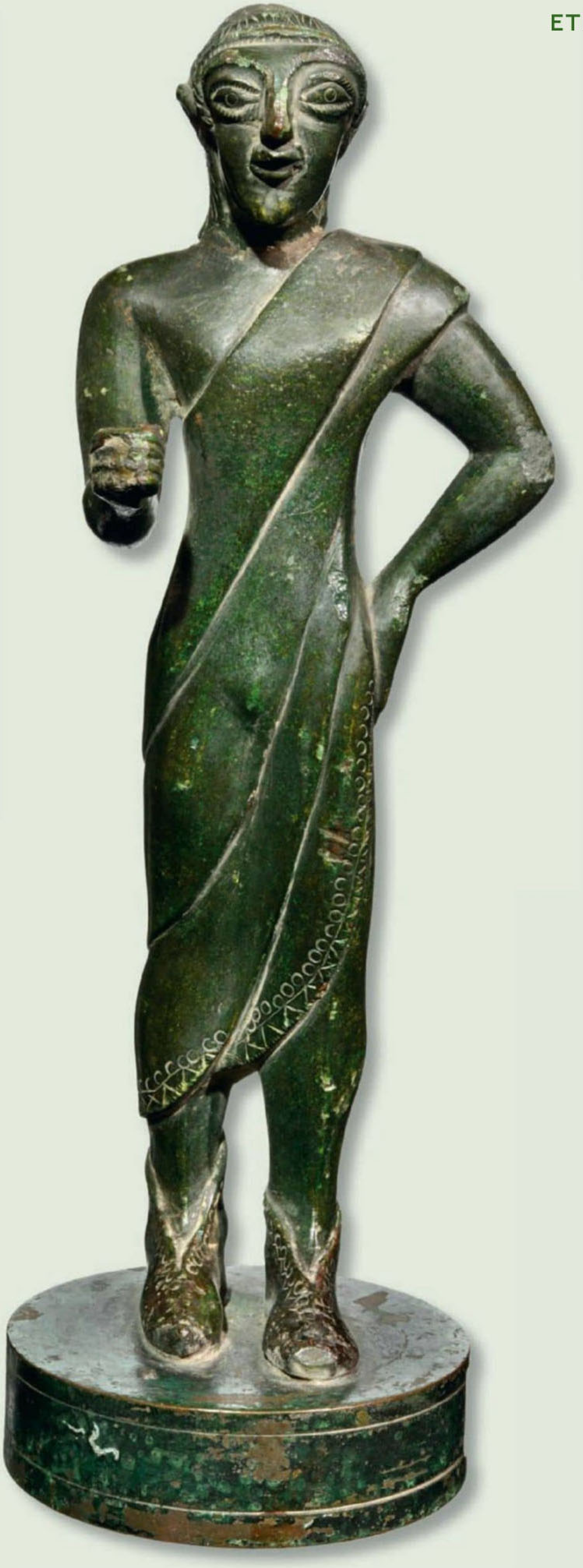
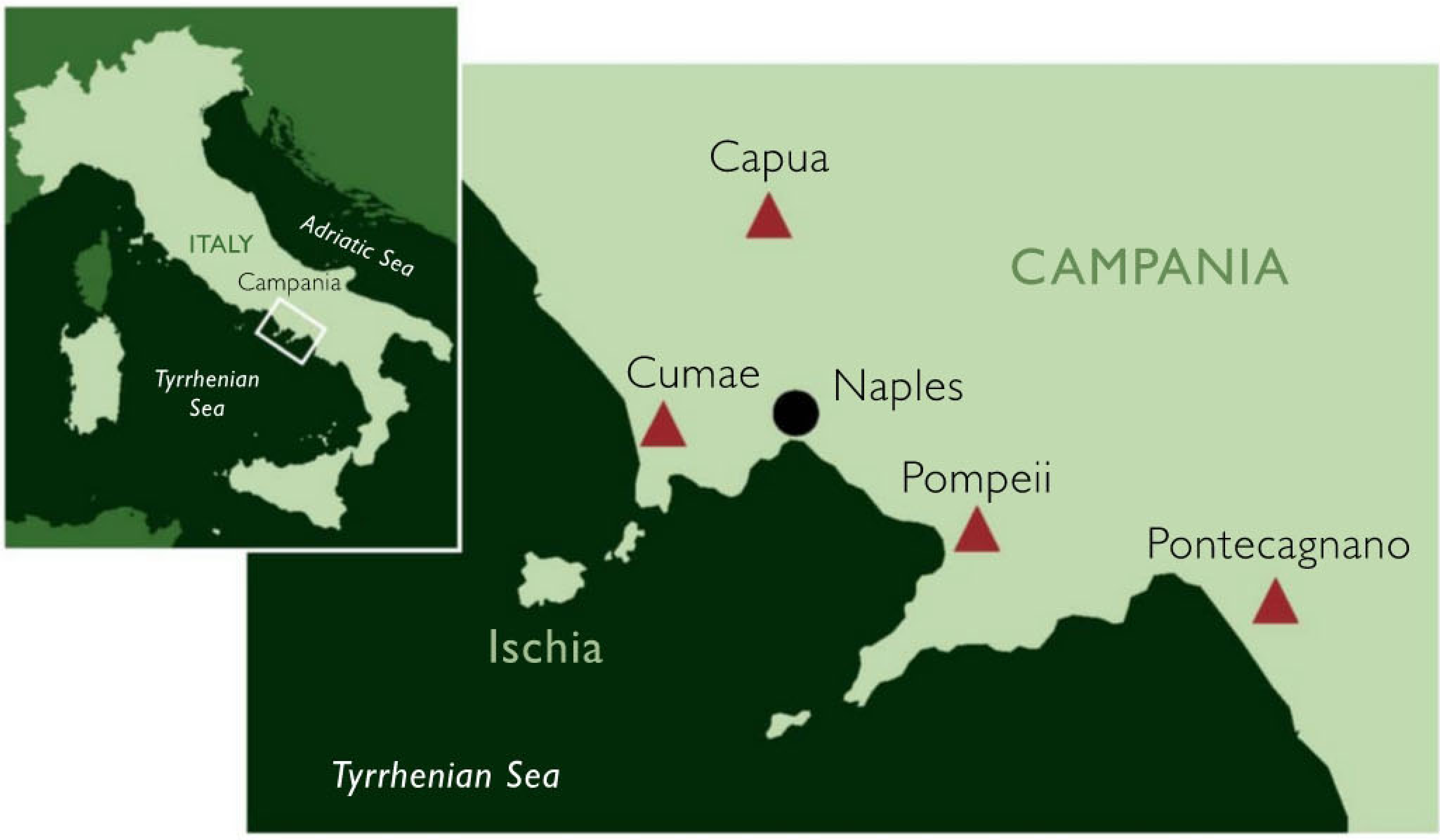
RIGHT Small bronze figurine of man in a toga, *c.*600 BC. Found on the Isle of Elba in 1764, the statuette's extended right arm once held an object that has been lost.



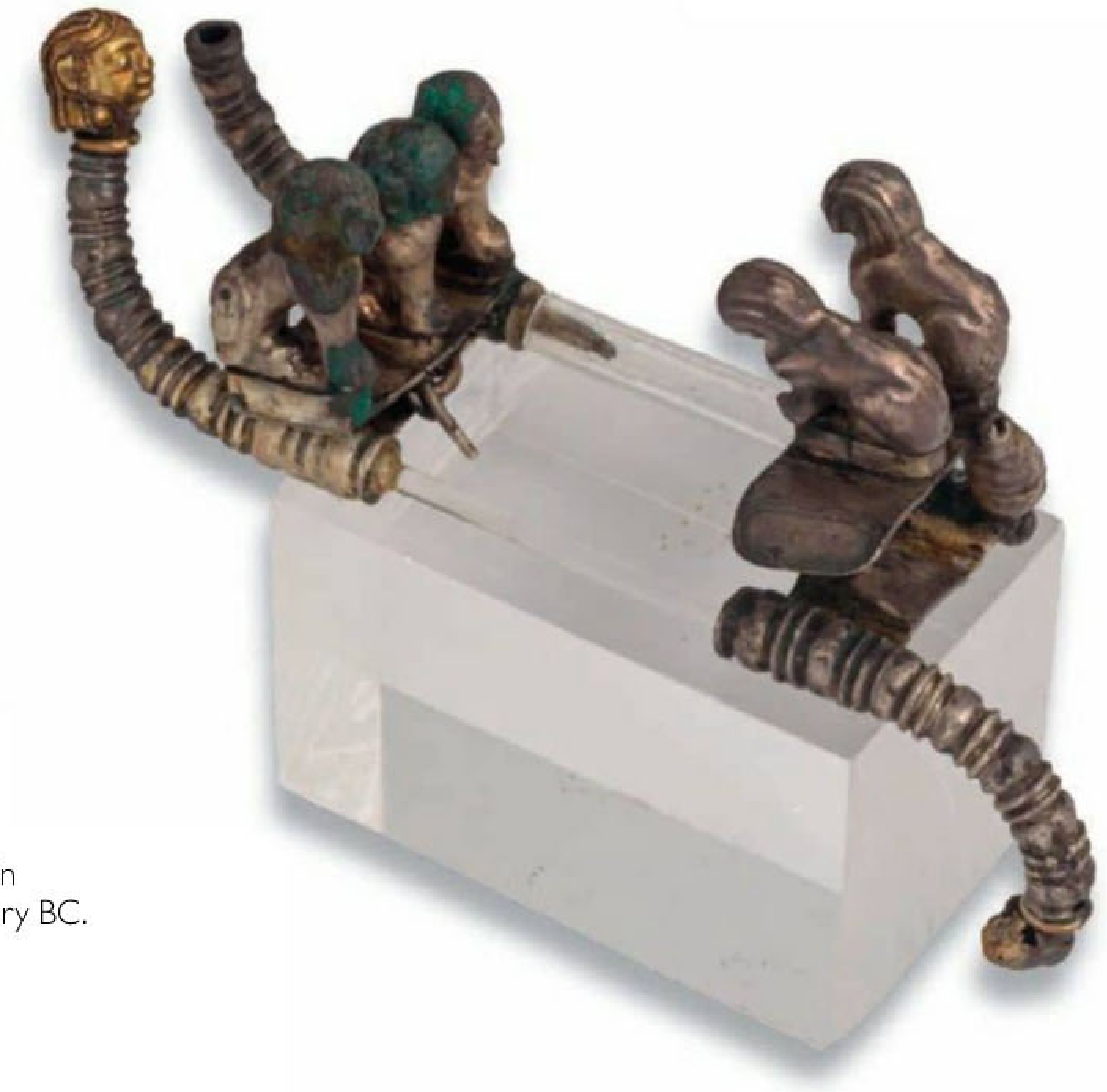


A particularly emblematic example of these processes can be seen in the Artiaco Tomb (Tomb 104) at Cumae. This is the oldest burial of the necropolis, dating back to the end of the 8th century BC. The furnishings of this tomb mix Greek components (like a silver cinerary urn whose decoration refers to a Homeric funeral ritual) with Etruscan elements (as seen in the shield) and reflect the magnificence of the cultural current of this period in which there were many connections to the eastern Mediterranean (such as the buckle, decorated with sphinxes and restored for the exhibition).

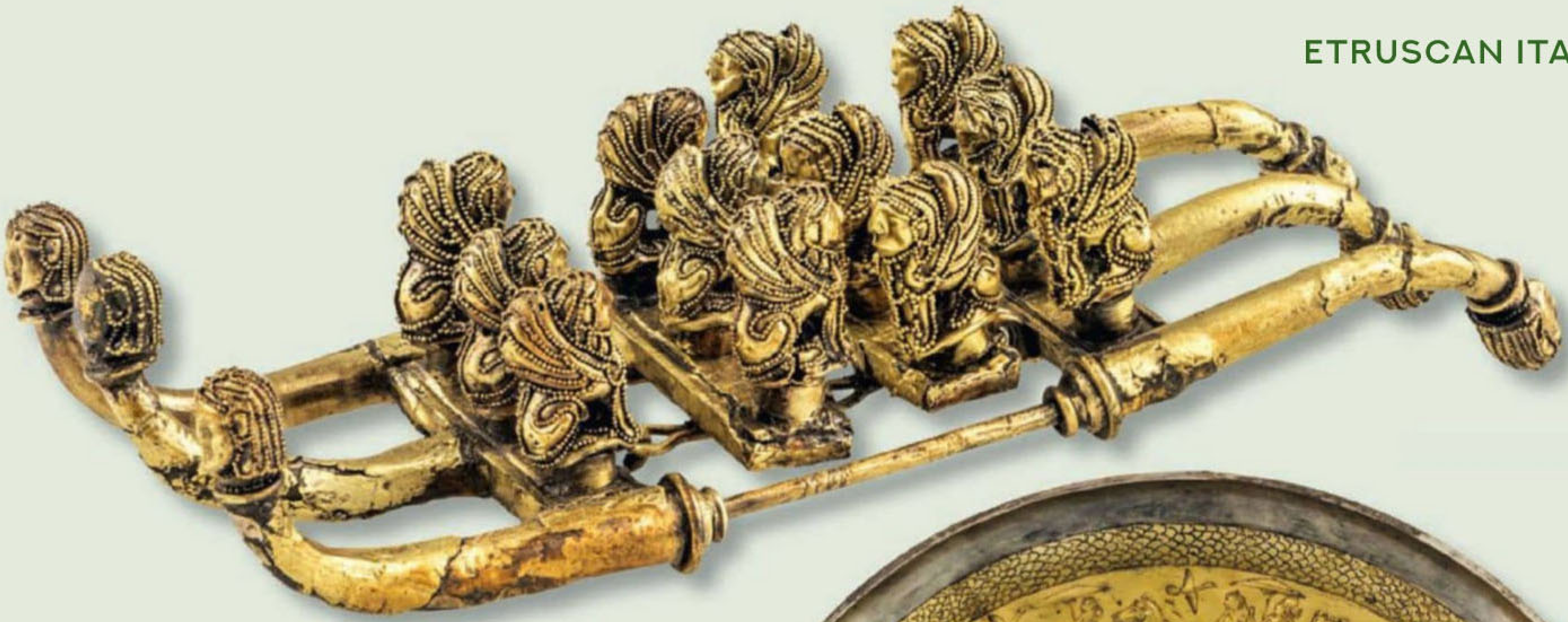
Displayed next to the Cumaean tomb are the exquisite grave goods from the slightly later Bernardini Tomb, from the Etruscan Museum at Villa Giulia. This princely burial from the 7th century BC, discovered in Palestrina, Lazio, in 1876, reveals through the luxuriousness and exotic nature of the objects a complete openness to the influences of eastern Mediterranean culture. It is a stunning example of the circulation of high-end goods and of the wealth accumulated by the elite in Etruria during the 7th century. Among the resplendent artefacts found within the burial are a gold buckle – again decorated with sphinxes, but also bearing female heads – and a spectacular gilded silver 'Phoenician' bowl. This is embossed and engraved with friezes of a hunting expedition and horses and flying birds, and has a central medallion showing a prisoner tied to a tree and a man being bitten by a dog, all encircled by a snake.

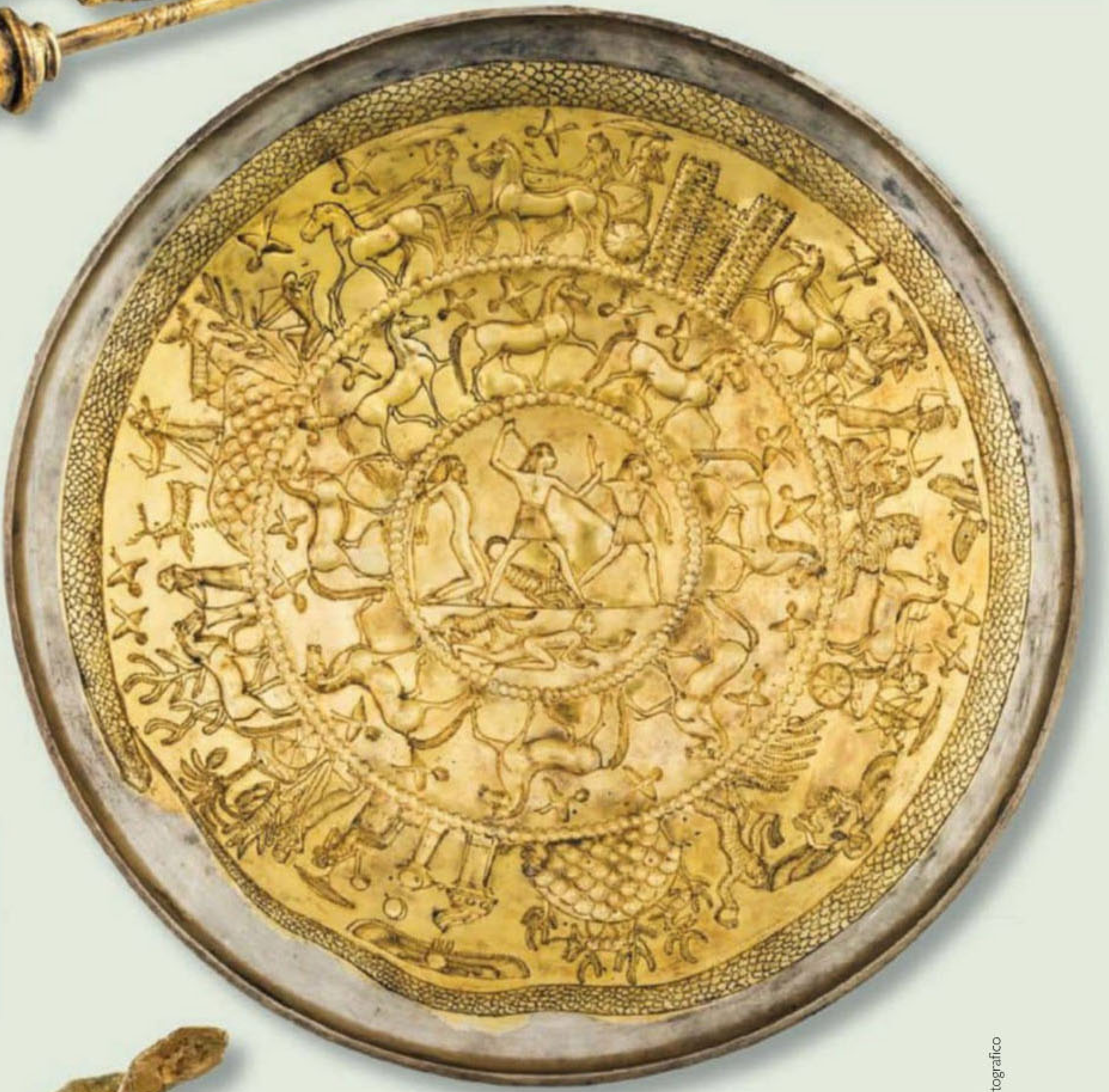
Exceptional finds trace the birth and growth of the Etruscan cities of Campania, and further highlight the cross-cultural connections of the period. The clay decorations from the roofs of the shrines in the Etruscan city of Capua, for instance, share a similar language with those of the Greek settlement of Cumae. There are many ceramics from these cities too, sometimes imported, and sometimes manufactured locally, such as *bucchero*, a distinct type of dark pottery that is characteristic of the Etruscans.

The mingling between the different cultures of ancient Campania, especially between Greeks, local populations, and Etruscans, is one of the central elements of the exhibition, but this coexistence was at times far from peaceful. Tensions and competition led to famous naval battles and even the emergence of propaganda in the guise of artistic production. Between the 6th and 5th centuries BC, the Etruscan powers in Campania were in crisis, a situation exacerbated by their →

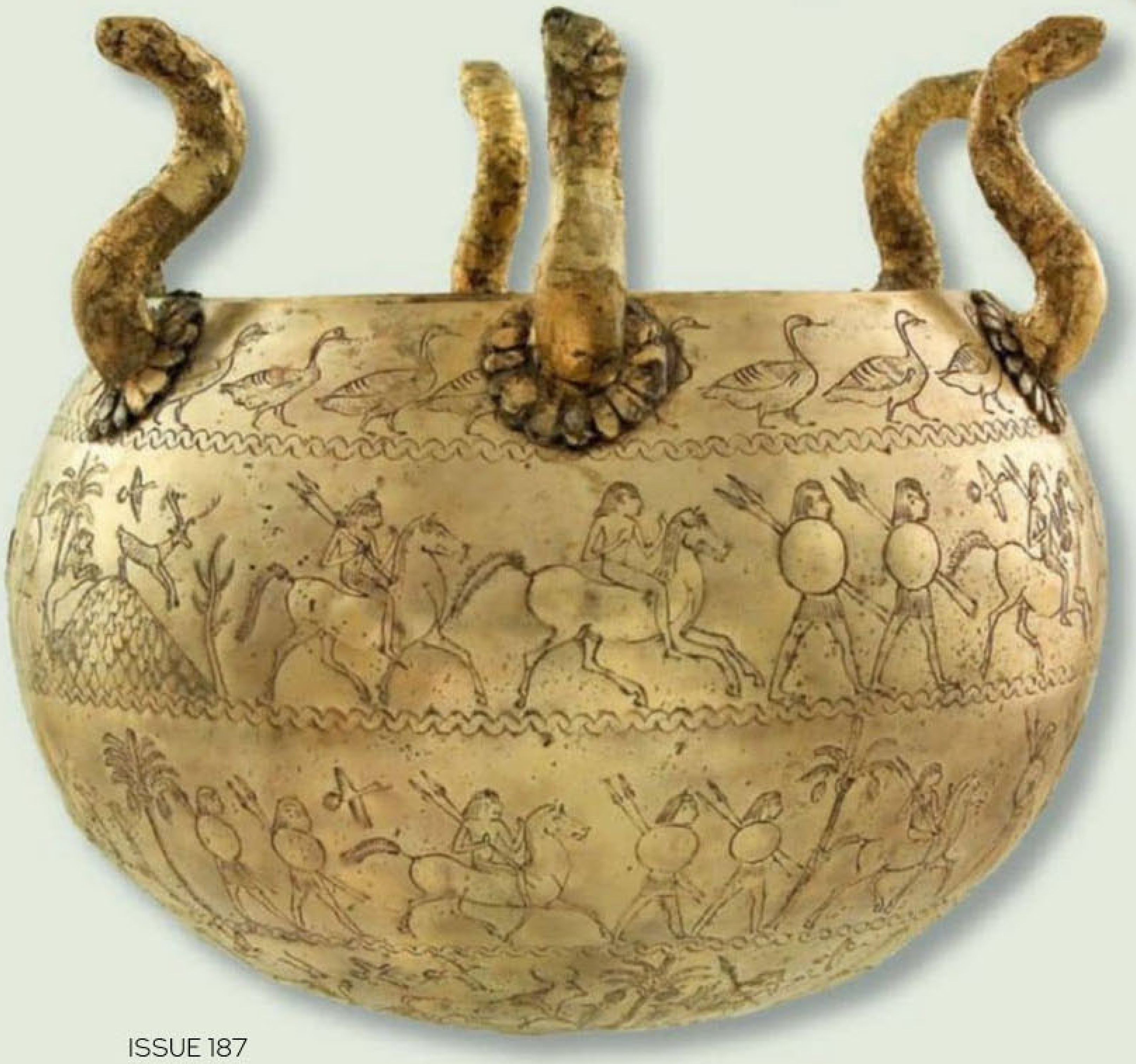


RIGHT Gold and silver buckle, decorated with sphinxes, found in a tomb in Cumae, late 8th century BC.





The 7th century BC Bernardini Tomb in Palestrina, located in Etruria proper, contained a rich array of gold and gilded silver objects. The grave goods include a gold buckle decorated with sphinxes and women's heads (**ABOVE**). The gilded silver 'Phoenician' bowl (**RIGHT**) is decorated with scenes of a hunting expedition, a series of horses and birds, and a central medallion showing a prisoner tied to a tree, with two other standing figures, one bitten by a dog. The a small gilded cauldron (**BELOW**) has friezes of geese, armed men, and scenes of rural life and hunting. The six snake protomes were added at a later date.



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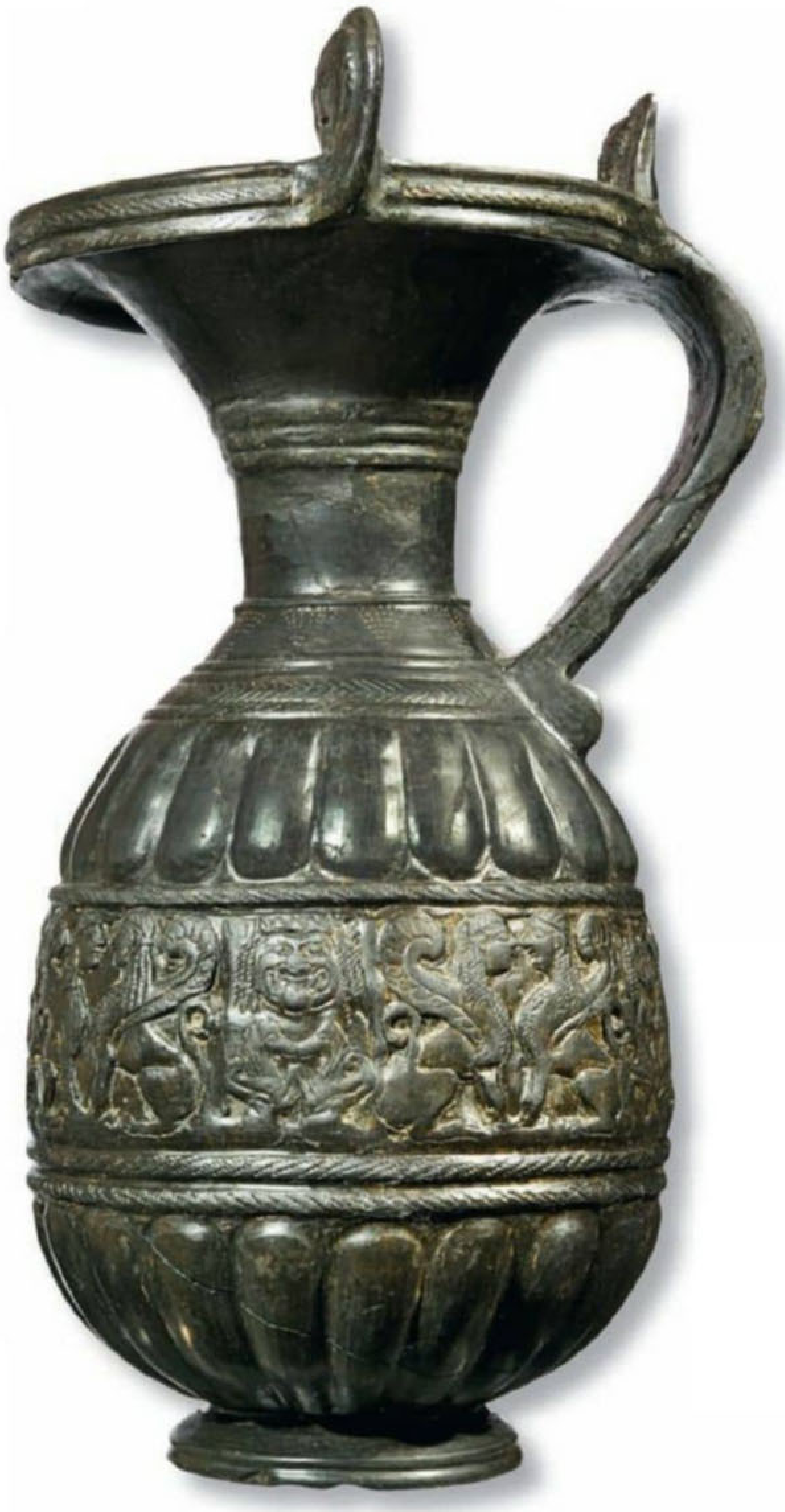
RIGHT *Oinochoe* (wine jug) in heavy *bucchero*, a typical Etruscan ceramic imitating embossed metal forms, 590-570 BC. It is decorated with pairs of sphinxes, gorgons, and winged horses.



defeat at the Battle of Cumae in 474, in which the navies of Cumae and Syracuse (a Greek settlement in Sicily) fought the Etruscans as part of their efforts to stem the Etruscan expansion into southern Italy. Such conflict is brought to mind by Greek vases that depict the Gigantomachia: the gods of Olympus fighting against the giants, which, according to myth, took place in the Phlegraean Fields, where there was also a confrontation between Etruscans and Cumaeans. The Etruscans were seen as Giants to be defeated and civilised by the Greeks, who are represented by the gods, and the period of conflict between the two groups coincided with the spread of the Gigantomachia in Greek art.

Coexistence is, of course, not only a matter of confrontation but also of enrichment and mutual cultural exchange. The frontier combines all these things, and the Etruscan 'cowboys' knew what they could expect as they pushed away from their lands.

Both in Etruria proper and on the frontier plains, the Etruscans were famously adept at divination (determining the will of the gods) and their fascination with birds and the role of these winged creatures in religion is highlighted in the exhibition through one intriguing bronze object: a container on wheels, a cultic trolley. It consists of a *cista* (a cylindrical box or basket) with a lid, on top of which are four birds. Its four legs lead down to wheels, and it is decorated with two bands of rings. This artefact in our collection lacks contextual dating information but it recalls other similar objects, as well as platters or tripods on wheels, which spread mainly between the end of the 9th and the 7th centuries BC, from the north to the south of the Italian peninsula. They were particularly prevalent in Villanovan Etruria.

It is possible that, like some of these objects, our little trolley was used as a perfume burner or to present offerings. These are thought to have been the functions of the most famous examples, celebrated for the complexity of their figurative decoration, such as that from Tomb 2 of the Olmo Bello necropolis at the ancient city Visentium in Tuscany. In the case of our artefact, the typology is consistent with the metal-working of Campania – such as *fibulae* (or pins), perhaps intended to be worn on parades, pendants, and lids, made in Capua between the middle of the 8th and the beginning of the 6th centuries BC, and also finds from Suessula and Lucera. Euboean Greek influences can be seen in the figurative elements, and help lead us to a date somewhere near the beginning of the 8th century BC.

The recurring motif of bird protomes, either on their own or in pairs, is often traced back to the idea of representing the solar boat (that is, the transporting of the sun, a symbol of rebirth, either by boat, as in the Egyptian world, or by birds, which are often identified as souls). But the presence of birds, and the fact that they are four in number, might suggest a different subject, namely the religious observation of birds in flight by the Etruscans, which was so celebrated in the ancient world.

As we have already seen with the hawk and the foundation of Capua, birds have clear religious significance. The observation

ABOVE An early 5th-century Attic black-figure *lekythos* (a Greek oil jar), showing the goddess Athena fighting two giants.

of the flight of birds for the purpose of divination in the world of the Etruscans is recorded as a widespread practice by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who speaks of *tyrrhenikè oionoscopia* (*tyrrhenikè*, or Tyrrhenian, is what the Greeks called the Etruscans). This was known in the Latin world as *auspicium* ('I observe birds').

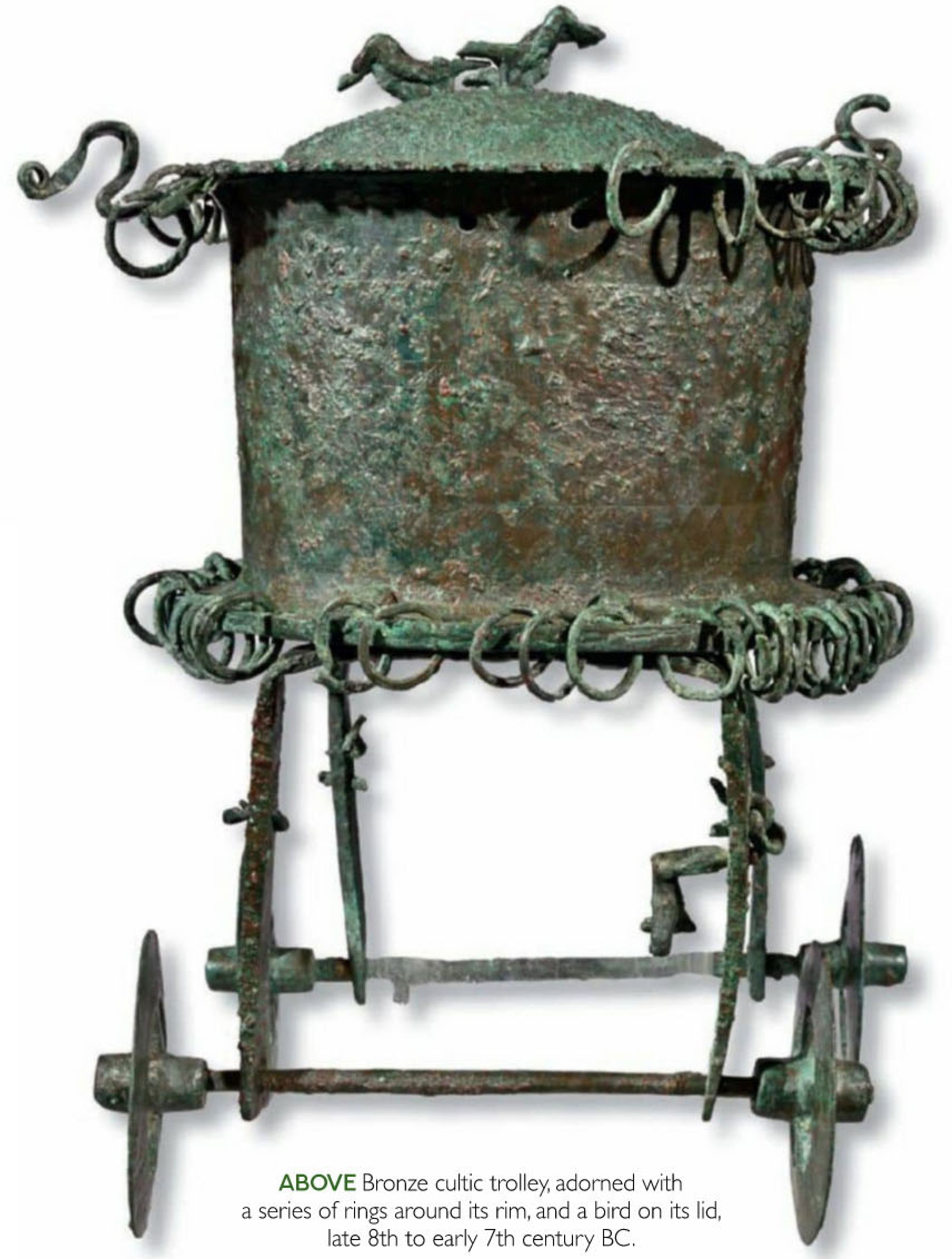
The most famous episode of the observation of the flight of birds is that relating to the foundation of Rome, as narrated by Livy. He tells us how the twin brothers Romulus and Remus studied the skies in order to decide who would be entitled, as king, to found and give their name to the city. First, Remus spotted six vultures; after that, Romulus saw twelve. A dispute arose because the former claimed that it was more important to have seen the birds first, the latter that the number mattered most. Varro later added another element: when he talks about the subsequent ritual of the *sulcus primigenius* – that is, the foundation ceremony of the new city – he points out that Romulus made use of an Etruscan rite.

There is a second episode, also reported by Livy, this time relating to Tarquinius Priscus. The historian informs us that this son of Demaratus (whose name was then still Lucumo) was arriving in Rome from Tarquinia with his partner, the Etruscan woman Tanaquil, when he suddenly saw an eagle coming down from above. The eagle took his *pilleus* (a felt headdress), lifted it into the air, and then put it back on the man's head, before eventually flying away. Tanaquil, an expert in celestial wonders, as the Etruscans are generally, immediately interpreted this episode as a sign of future royalty for her husband. Once he became king of Rome, Lucumo took the name Tarquinius Priscus.

Clues about what birds meant to the Etruscans come from a number of later authors. The Roman writer Pliny the Elder says in his *Natural History* that species of birds not seen for centuries were described in the set of Etruscan religious scriptures, known as the *Etrusca Disciplina*. Ancient literature speaks of ritual books that concerned themselves generally with the religious procedures to be observed on occasions such as the foundation of a city or a sacred area, and for all things relating to war and peace, the span of a human life, the duration of states, and, above all (according to Cicero's account), the treatment of *ostenta*, the tell-tale signs.

The roster of these signs was continually expanding, as Etruscan priests noted new omens. In this way the *ostentaria* – documents cataloguing the *ostenta* – arose: we have some fragments from an *ostentarium arborarium* (concerning trees) mentioned by Macrobius, and we can attempt to reconstruct parts of other *ostentaria* based on how Roman haruspices, rooted in Etruscan traditions, interpreted various portents. Later the scholar Servius, in his commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid*, recalls that there were chapters of sacred books that deciphered the flight of birds, and the fortunate presence of glosses of Etruscan words (such as *capys* and *hiuls*, the little owl) recorded in late antique commentaries give further hints.

Texts and exceptional artefacts such as the Liver of Piacenza (a bronze model of a sheep's liver used in divination, found in the →



ABOVE Bronze cultic trolley, adorned with a series of rings around its rim, and a bird on its lid, late 8th to early 7th century BC.

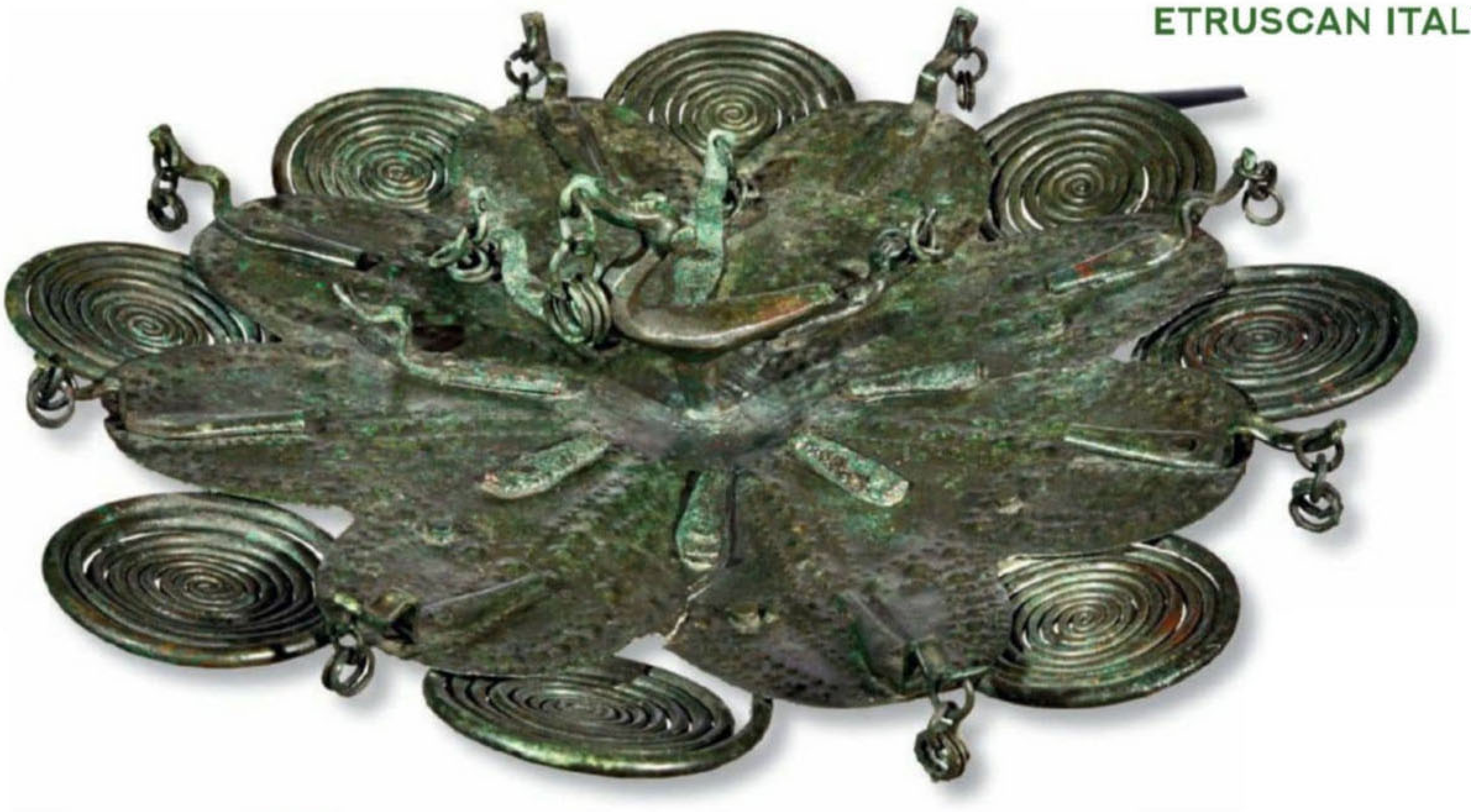
Tuscan town Piacenza) reveal a basic concept in the Etruscan belief system: the division of the sky into 16 parts, each dedicated to a deity and each either more favourable for wishes or less so. This division of heaven could be transferred on to particular materials used for soothsaying, such as a sheep's liver. Depending on where a particular event takes place (whether the flight of a bird, lightning in the sky, or, if examining the liver, the location of spots), the priest could predict the good or bad outcome of an action that you wanted to take.

In our wheeled *cista* and its four birds, we can perhaps detect a veiled reference to the organisation of the sky in religion, which is ultimately divided into those 16 sections, but was first divided into four sections, each referring to a group of deities. In this way, the appearance and the course of the flight of the bird would swiftly clarify to the priest the nature of the omen.

Romans were fascinated by the beliefs of the Etruscans and their skill at interpreting omens, and drew heavily on Etruscan culture, but more modern interest in the Etruscans of Campania is also explored in the exhibition. This interest – both from the point of view of scholarship and collecting – has been continuous and has early roots, as demonstrated by the small bronze figurine of a worshipper from the island of Elba, which entered the collections of the Royal Museum of Naples (the MANN's predecessor) at the end of the 18th century. The Etruscan collections of the MANN grew between the 18th and 19th century, as the museum set out to follow the 19th-century idea of a 'universal' museum, looking beyond the local Campania area. Objects, mainly from Etruria, entered the museum from various sources, including the Borgia Collection (from which come carved friezes from a religious building in Velletri, Lazio) and the Spinelli Collection, which has amassed *bucchero* vessels, sarcophagus lids shaped to show the deceased at a banquets, bottles for fragrances, jewellery, coins, and more. An abundance of historic studies of the Etruscan civilisation from the museum's library, along with historical furniture, show a strong antiquarian interest in the subject, as well as a taste for the antique in design.

The two exhibitions on the Etruscans in Campania – the first in Pompeii and the current one at the MANN – have rekindled interest in one of the great cultures to have crossed the region since the early Iron Age. They provide a context for findings made over a considerable stretch of time, and fully support the assertions made by the ancient geographer and historian Strabo, who wrote about how the Etruscans, extending their domain in Campania as far south as Agro Picentino, founded a dodecapolis in the region, following the model they had established in Etruria and in the north of Italy. Capua was the main centre, but the other key towns were Nola, Nocera, Herculaneum, Pompeii, Sorrento, Marcina, Velcha, Velsu, Irnthi, Uri, and Hyria.

And there is still more that could be done beyond the exhibition: there is the enticing possibility of exploring a network of museums that would help visitors to understand fully the presence of the Etruscans



ABOVE A bronze 'parade' *fibula* from the Suessula necropolis, 8th century BC. Spirals of bronze surround the large disc, and in the middle sit four ducks.

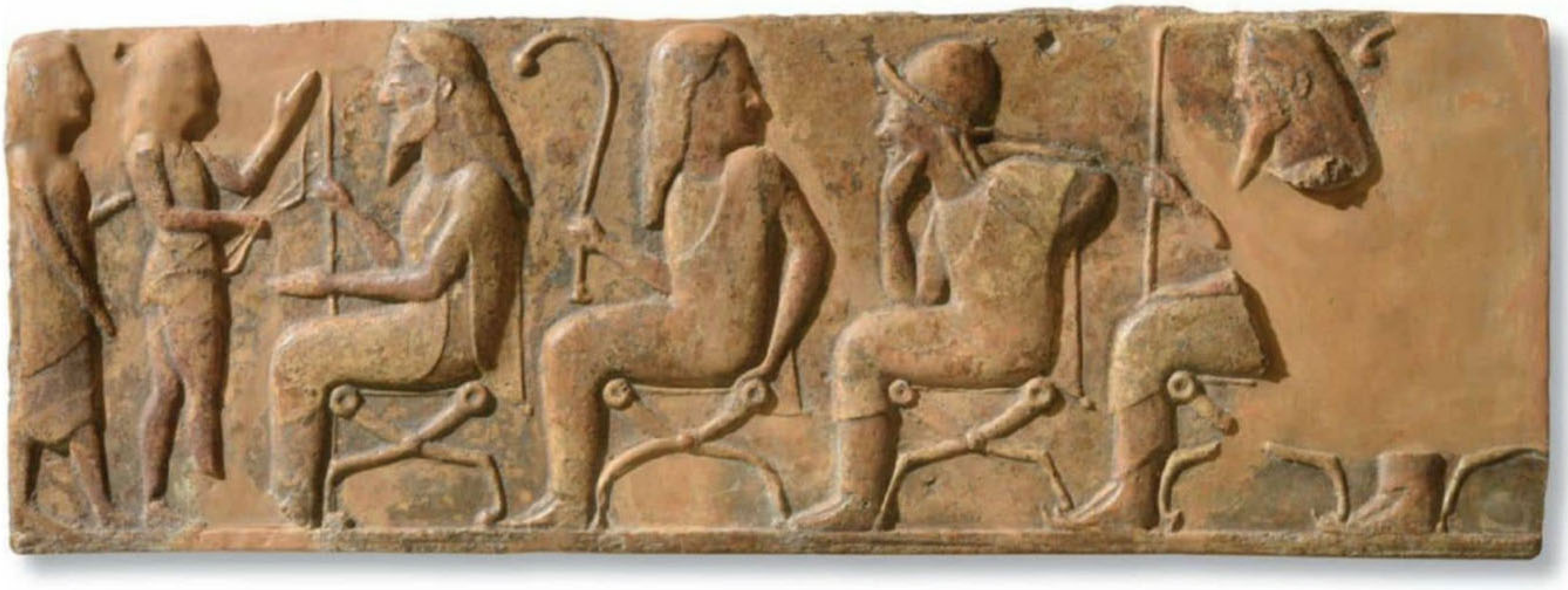
in Campania. In this way, you could explore, through archaeological finds and also linguistic traces (in addition to the name of Capua, you might think of Cava dei Tirreni, the Tyrrhenian Sea, Castel Volturno, or the Volturno and Clani rivers, all of which have clear Etruscan roots), the extraordinary cultural strata of these lands. Together with the MANN, a large group of museums could be included, but we will restrict ourselves to mentioning only the most remarkable – and without forgetting that, in Naples itself, there is a small Etruscan museum, the De Feis Etruscan Archaeological Museum, which preserves interesting Etruscan finds from the necropoleis of the Cannicella and the Crocifisso del Tufo in Orvieto.

In Campania alone, there are a number of important cultural institutes that should not be left off any Etruscan itinerary. The first is the Provincial Museum of Campania in Capua, best known for its Matres Matutae (statues of women nursing infants). The second is the National Archaeological Museum of Pontecagnano, displaying finds from the Villanovan and Etruscan-Campanian centre of Pontecagnano and its 'princely' burials. Another important stop is the Archaeological Museum of Ancient Capua, with many objects of Etruscan origin: bronze bowls with beaded rims; *bucchero* vases, both imported and locally produced; architectural decorations, such as antefixes in the shape of palmettes, the head of a Gorgon or the Greek river god Acheloos. Etruscan finds are also on view in the National Archaeological Museums of Calatia, the Sarno Valley, the Sannio Caudino, and Montesarchio.

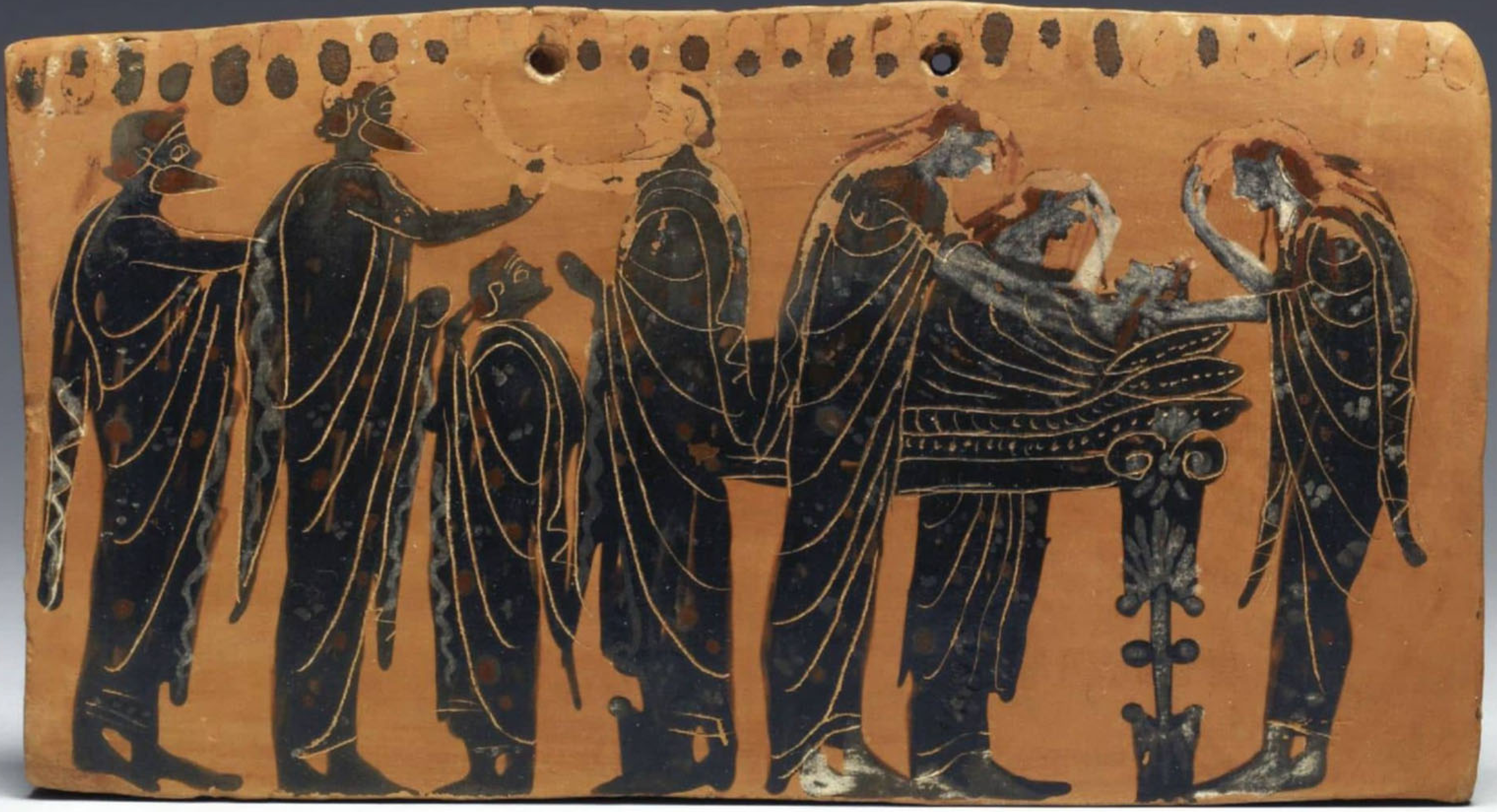
Together, the museums form a sort of new dodecapolis, where visitors can follow the frontier trail of the Etruscans.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Etruscans and the MANN runs at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli until 31 May 2021. Visit *www.museoarcheologiconapoli.it/it/* for more information.



ABOVE Ceramic frieze that once adorned the 'Temple of the Stigmata' in Velletri, late 6th century BC. The scene shows the apotheosis of Heracles (on the left) who is presented by Athena to the Olympians. The bearded god with a rod towards the left is perhaps Tinia (the Etruscan equivalent of Zeus), and the one with the curved staff might be Turms (Etruscan Hermes).



ABOVE Terracotta *pinax* (painted plaque) from the 5th century BC, attributed to the Gela Painter, showing a funerary scene. The deceased lies on a bed, surrounded by family, some tearing their hair in mourning.

THE GREAT BEYOND

The ancient Greeks thought much about the dead – how their remains should be disposed of, how their spirits might be summoned, how malignant they could be if unavenged. Classicist **David Stuttard** brings us face to face with the Greek dead.

IMAGE: Walters Art Museum [CC0]

Near the western shores of Greece, just south of Corfu's southern tip and the lovely mainland seaside town of Parga, the modern village of Ephyra sprawls on a low hill above well-watered farmland. Sheep's bells clack hypnotically; crows caw from nearby trees; and far off to the east the jagged mountains of Thesprotia shimmer like a mirage in the morning haze. It is a place of such beguiling peace and beauty that even the most well-informed, imaginative visitor must struggle to envisage how it looked 3,000 years ago. For then, instead of fertile ploughland, marshes stretched towards the seashore; a shallow lake, reedy and loud with frogs, lapped against the cliffs that fall sheer from the hillock's farther flank; and the sluggish streams that fed it bore foreboding names – Acheron, Cocytus, Pyriphlegethon – names they shared with darker, more sepulchral rivers, the rivers of the Underworld, of Hades. Then, too, the atmosphere was foetid with the stench of stagnant water and the still air thick with screaming clouds of myriad mosquitoes. Can there be any wonder that Bronze Age Greeks associated Ephyra with the dank lands of the dead, or that it was here (some say) that the bewitching Circe sent Odysseus on a mission to commune with hungry ghosts?

Here, as instructed, the Greek hero dug a pit, and, summoning the dead, poured out libations of milk and honey, wine and water, sprinkled white barley meal, and slit the throats of sacrificial sheep, allowing the black blood to drench the earth. At once, thirsty spectres coiled out of the ground, craving blood and mutton; but Odysseus, crouching with his sword outstretched, would not let even his own mother's spirit feast until he heard all he had come to learn from the ghost of Teiresias the prophet, still proudly clutching the golden sceptre that had been his in life.

This encounter – envisaged in Homer's *Odyssey*, one of the earliest works of Western literature – already reveals much about Greek attitudes towards the dead. Insubstantial their spirits might →

BELOW Antonio Zanchi, *Sisyphus*. Oil on canvas, *c*.1660-1665.

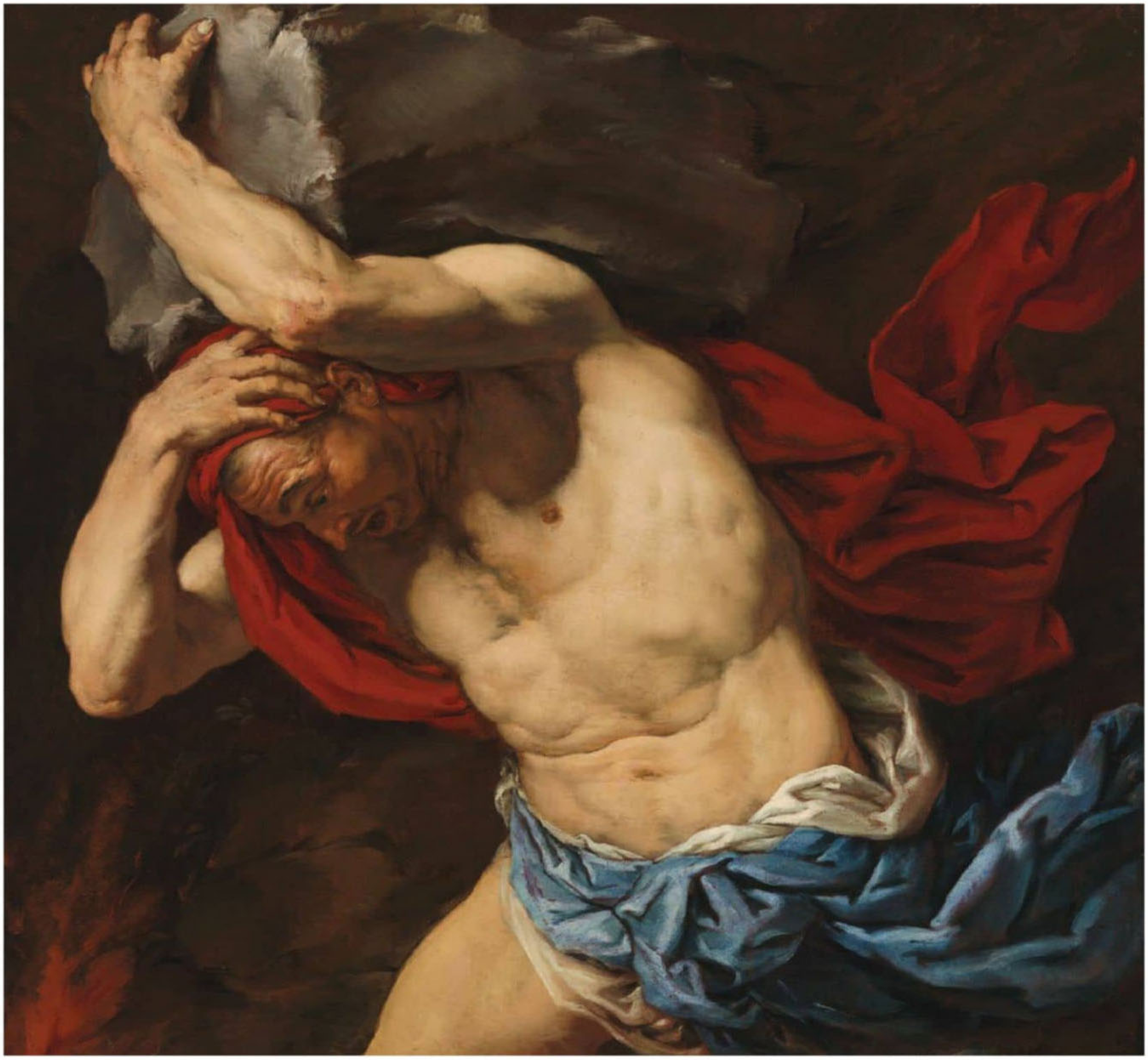
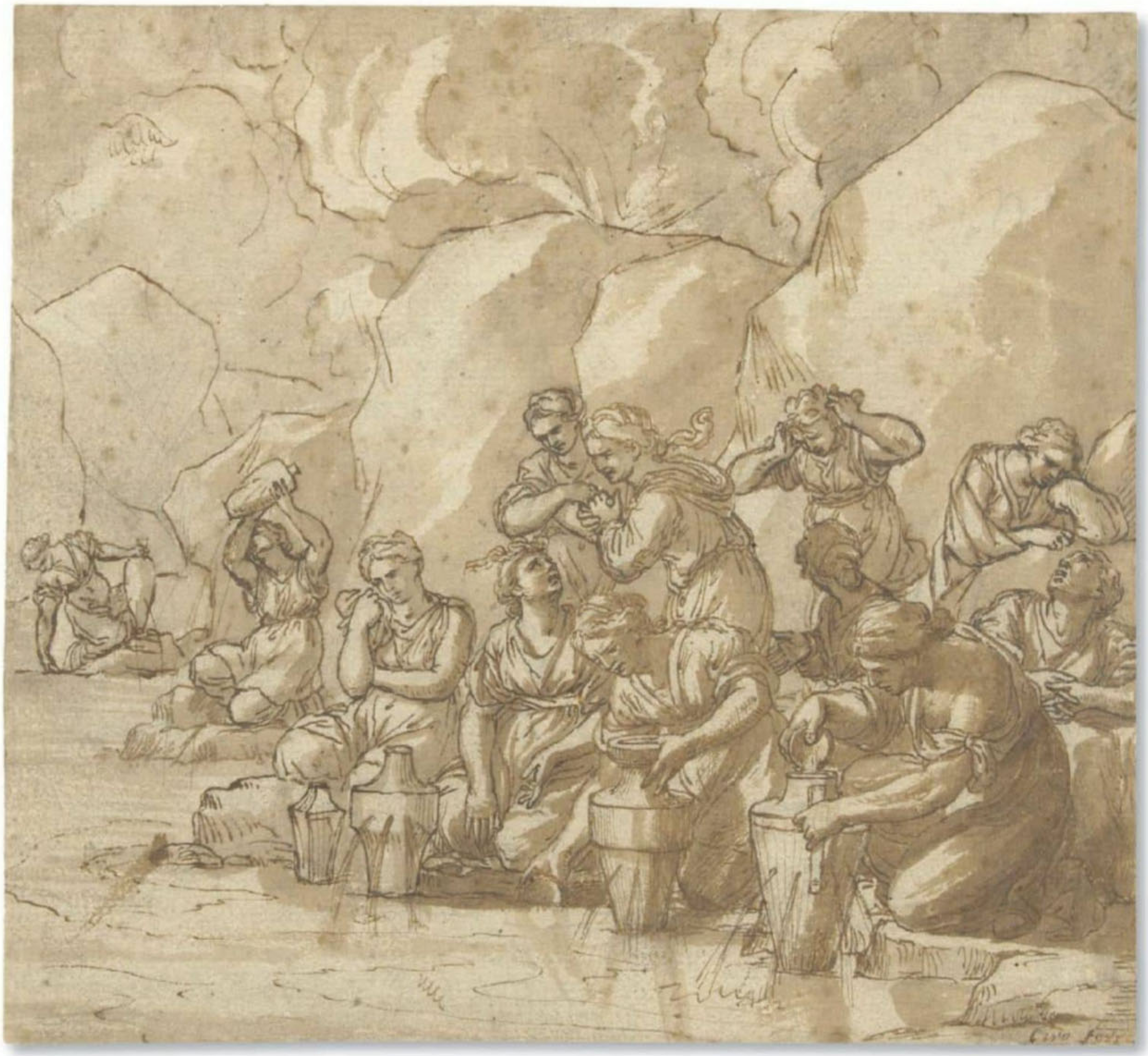


IMAGE: Mauritshuis, the Hague



ABOVE Ciro Ferri, *The Danaids*. Chalk and ink on paper, *c.*1644-1689.

IMAGE: Rijksmuseum, the Netherlands [CC0]

be, but they could still be cowed by the sharp edge of a bronze sword; removed beneath the earth, they nonetheless retained an interest in what was happening on it; and, though wraith-like, they were still recognisable from when they lived. Among the spirits Odysseus met Achilles, the bravest Greek at Troy, still powerful even in death, though this was little consolation. 'I would rather be alive and hired out to a landless pauper as a labourer', he famously declared, 'than rule over all the dead.'

This did not mean that the dead were unconcerned about their status in the afterlife, for even now there was a social and moral hierarchy. In the Underworld, those guilty while alive of heinous crimes might be condemned to suffer fitting punishments – Sisyphus, who tried to cheat death, was compelled to push a boulder up towards the upper world, only for it to roll repeatedly back down to Hades; Tantalus, who tried to trick gods into eating human flesh, endured torments of thirst and hunger; and the daughters of Danaus, who killed their husbands, performed forever the wifely chore of fetching water, but with no hope of success, since their amphoras had been deliberately holed.

Meanwhile, the brave or virtuous could enjoy a privileged eternity. Homer's contemporary, Hesiod, imagined carefree heroes living in the Islands of the Blessed, while the 5th century BC poet Pindar described them riding, wrestling, playing draughts, or strumming lyres. By the time that he was writing, the prospect of a blissful afterlife was available to to lesser mortals, too, at so-called 'mystery cults', such as those held at Eleusis near Athens, where by undergoing physical ordeals initiates were promised spiritual contentment in the Underworld.

Yet, for the dead to be truly content, it mattered how they were treated by the living. To be remembered well was paramount. Faced with the choice, Achilles preferred an early death and 'undecaying' fame to unsung old age (notwithstanding this was a choice he lived – or died – to regret), while in the early 6th century BC Sappho took pleasure in taunting an acquaintance:

When you are dead, you will lie forgotten.
No one will mourn you,
   no one bring roses for you from Pieria.
In death as in life
   you will be quite anonymous,
   wandering vaguely
   with the aimless, nameless dead.

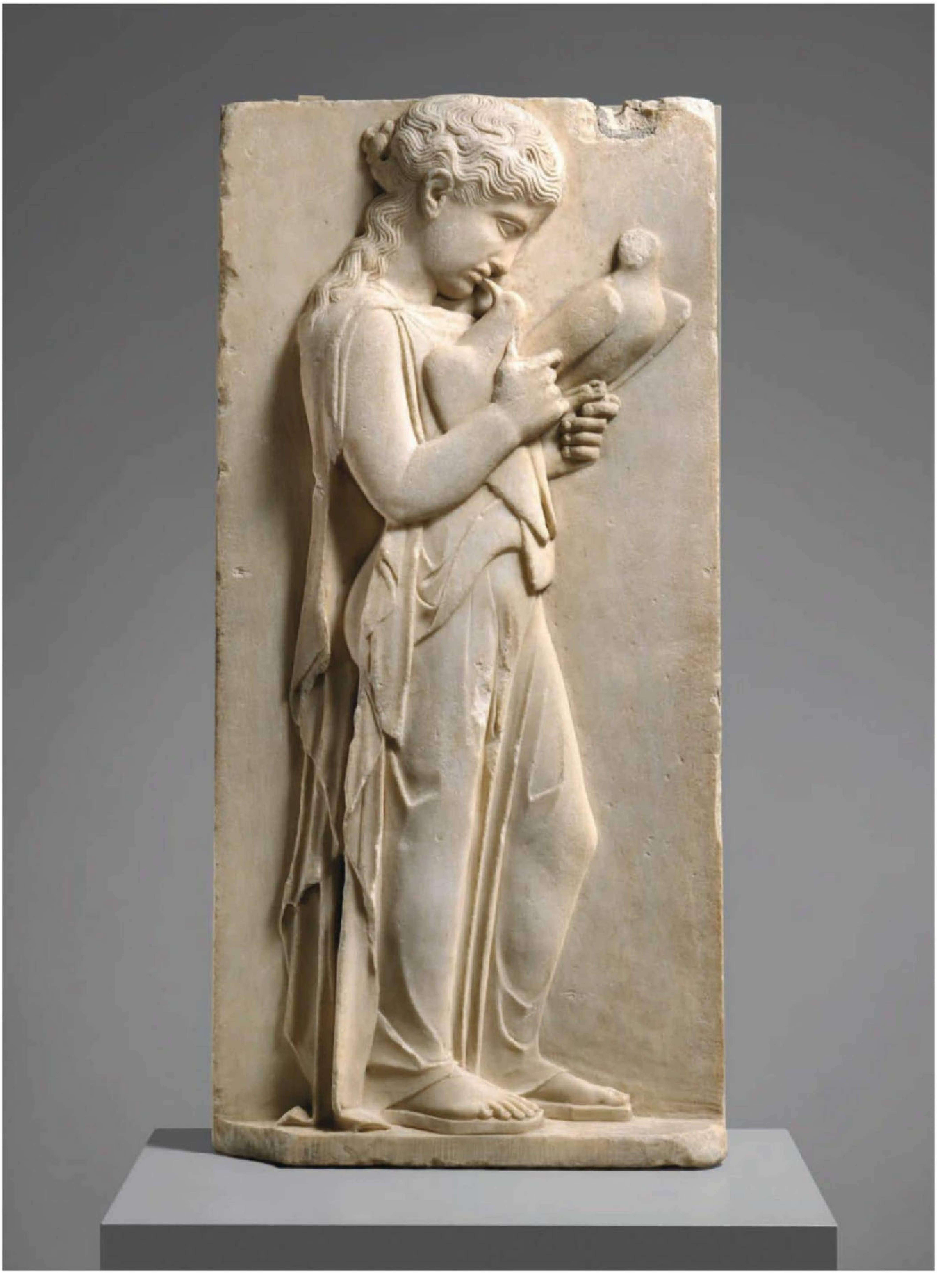
IMAGES: D Stuttard

ABOVE Many monuments to the dead still stand in ancient Athens' public cemetery at Kerameikos, north-west of the Acropolis.

To be one of the wandering, homeless dead was clearly feared by many Greeks, which was why the respectful treatment of remains was so important. Appearing in a dream to Achilles, the ghost of his friend Patroclus berated him for leaving Patroclus' body unburied and thus preventing him from interacting with the other dead. This matter of proper burial pervades much of Greek literature. Perhaps most famous is Sophocles' *Antigone*, where King Creon of Thebes forbids the burial of Oedipus' son, Polyneices, killed leading a foreign army against his city (an impious extension of an actual Athenian law denying burial in their native soil to traitors and temple-robbers).

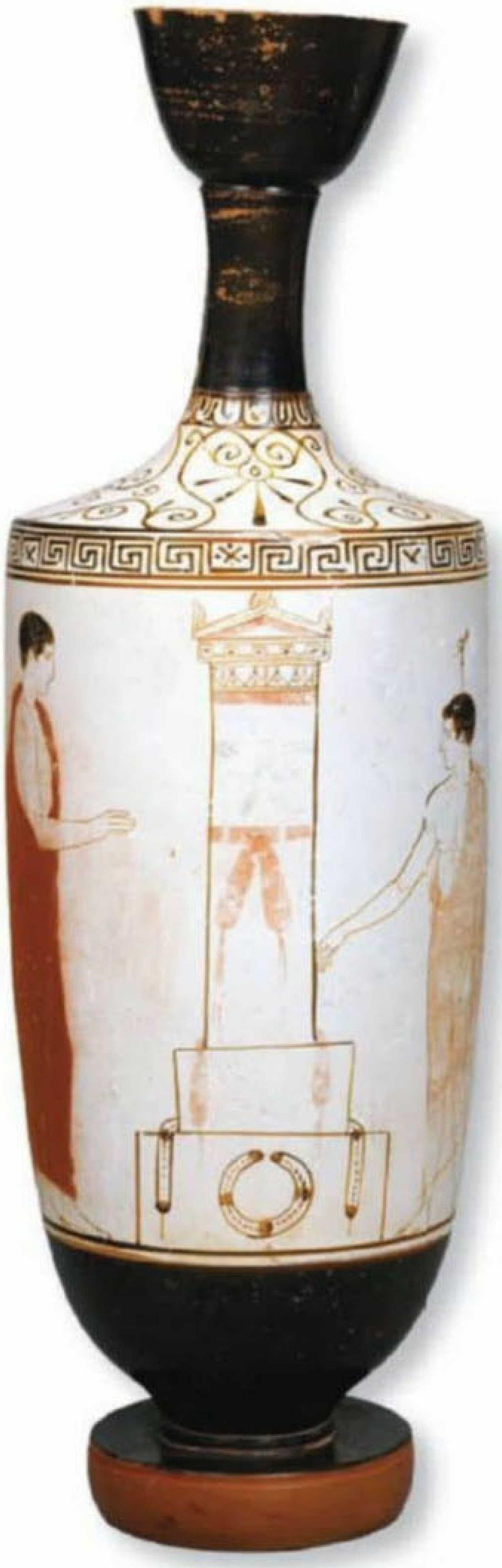
While Romans believed that the souls of the unburied were forbidden access to the Underworld, it is unlikely that this view prevailed in the 5th century BC or earlier – in the *Iliad*, unburied Patroclus declares that his spirit is wandering in Hades, while Penelope's unburied suitors successfully reach Hades in the *Odyssey*. Rather, Greeks, whose sense of identity lay in belonging to the larger group of family and city, may have imagined that the spirits of the unburied were excluded from interaction with those of fellow citizens or family members. If, as the Spartan poet Tyrtaeus wrote, the worst thing in life is to be 'an outcast and a beggar, wandering the world', it is probable that this was the worst thing in death too, and that to deprive a corpse of burial was, quite literally, to condemn the soul to a fate worse than death. Such attitudes would explain why, in 406 BC, the Athenian democracy was so incensed at admirals who failed to pull dead oarsmen from the sea after their victory at the Battle of Arginusae that they voted to execute them; that the admirals had been prevented in their duty by a sudden storm was simply not a good enough excuse for not ensuring that the dead could take their rightful place in the parallel Athenian society of the Underworld.

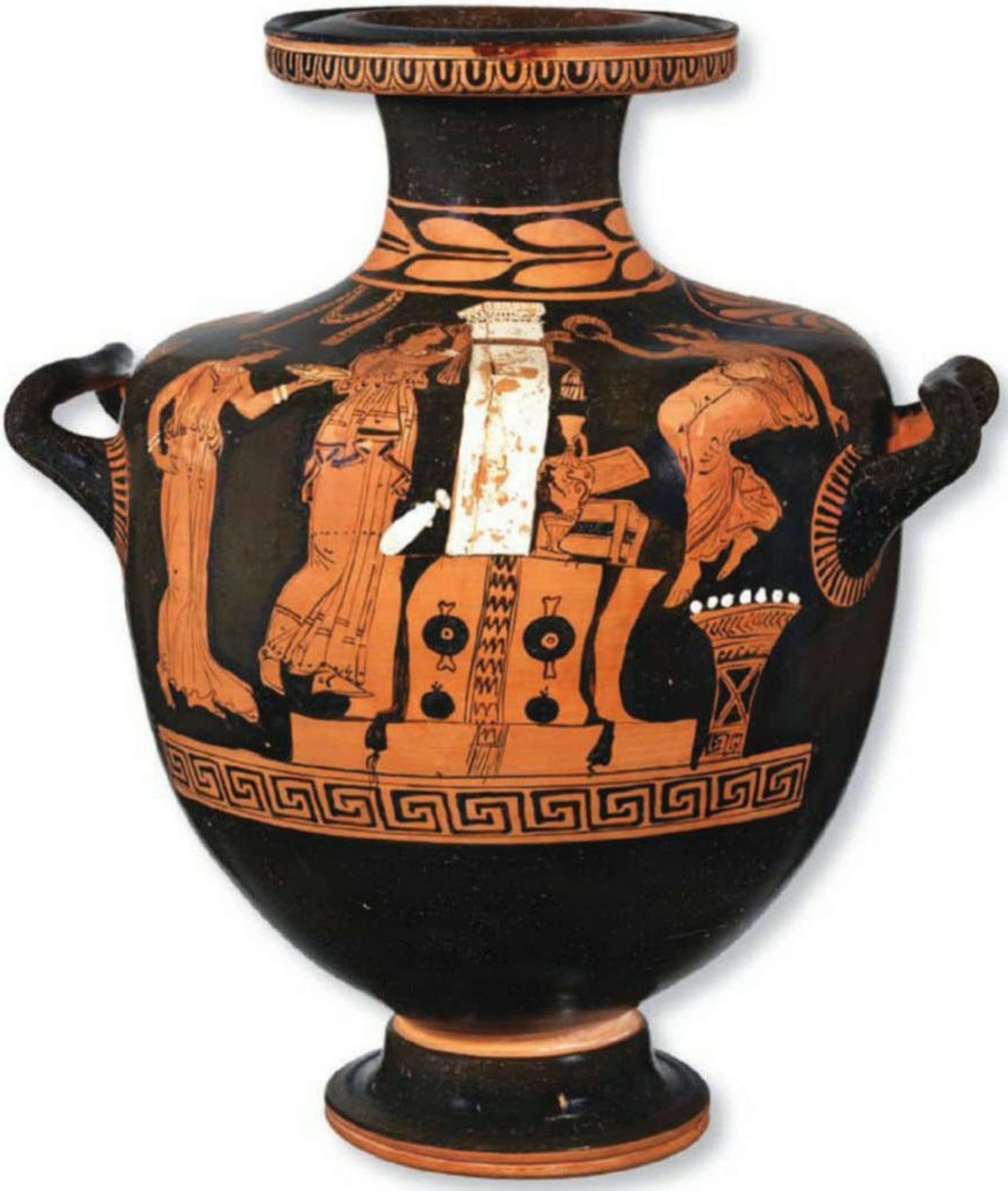
Under normal circumstances, Athenians of the 5th and 4th century BC did all they could to honour their war dead, not least in annual commemoration services held on the road between the city and the Grove of Academus, where, accompanied by an impassioned, patriotic speech, the cremated remains of the fallen were laid to rest →



ABOVE Parian marble grave stele of a girl with her pet doves, c.450-440 BC.

IMAGE: Metropolitan Museum of Art [CC0]





ABOVE LEFT On this Attic white-ground funerary *lekythos* (oil flask), a mourner (on the left) attends the grave of the deceased (who appears on the right, with a diminuitive soul above his head). Attibuted to the Achilles Painter, *c.*440 BC.
ABOVE RIGHT A woman ties a fillet around a gravemarker, while two others present a wreath and a libation, on this red figure *hydria* (water jar) attributed to the workshop of the Iliupersis Painter, *c.*375-350 BC.

IMAGES: Metropolitan Museum of Art [CC0]

in the Public Cemetery. The ashes were contained in ten cedarwood coffins, one for each of the tribes of Athens (further evidence of the importance of belonging to a civic group), but there was, too, one symbolic empty coffin for those 'whose bodies are missing and cannot be retrieved after battle'; for, although these men could not be buried, it was still important to honour them, since no one wanted to be plagued by angry ghosts, and the malignant dead could be destructive. The audience for Euripides' *Hekabe* (*c.*424 BC) knew this well and found nothing strange in Achilles' ghost demanding that the Trojan princess Polyxena be sacrificed to him simply because he felt that he had not received sufficient recognition for his role in taking Troy.

If Achilles, honoured with a sumptuous funeral, was able to feel so aggrieved, what might a dead man do who had been treated with far less respect? The people of Temesa in southern Italy found out to their cost, when in the early 5th century BC they were troubled by a vengeful spirit. They told how, blown off course on the voyage home from Troy, one of Odysseus' crew raped a Temesan virgin, for which the locals stoned him to death. Thereafter the man's spectre stalked the town, attacking old and young alike, until the Delphic oracle bade the Temesans build it a temple, and annually dedicate the most beautiful virgin in the land to be its 'wife' and priestess. Visiting Temesa at the time of the yearly rituals, however, the Olympic boxing champion Euthymus fell in love with the chosen bride and vowed to do battle with the spirit. So he donned his armour, fought with it and drove it down into the sea, before marrying the maiden and living happily ever after. But Euthymus did not meet a normal death. Instead, he vanished into thin air, and so became a hero.

In the strictest sense a hero was a man who had accomplished such outstanding deeds in life that in death he became semi-divine. Not all heroes vanished like Euthymus. Indeed, many found their bones being treated as religious relics with special magic powers. In response to an oracle, 6th century BC Spartans relocated bones from nearby Tegea said to have belonged to the legendary Orestes, ownership of which they were convinced would bring them victory. In the following century, the Athenian general-cum-politician Cimon scoured Skyros for the resting place of Theseus. When, guided by an eagle, his men discovered a huge skeleton buried with a bronze sword and an antique spear, he shipped it back to Athens, where he oversaw the building of a sanctuary in the city centre, so that the hero could promote his power most strongly. Although his own bones were repatriated following his death in Cyprus, Cimon was himself later worshipped – on the instructions of Apollo – at a hero-shrine in the island's city of Citium, where his spirit was believed to avert epidemics. →

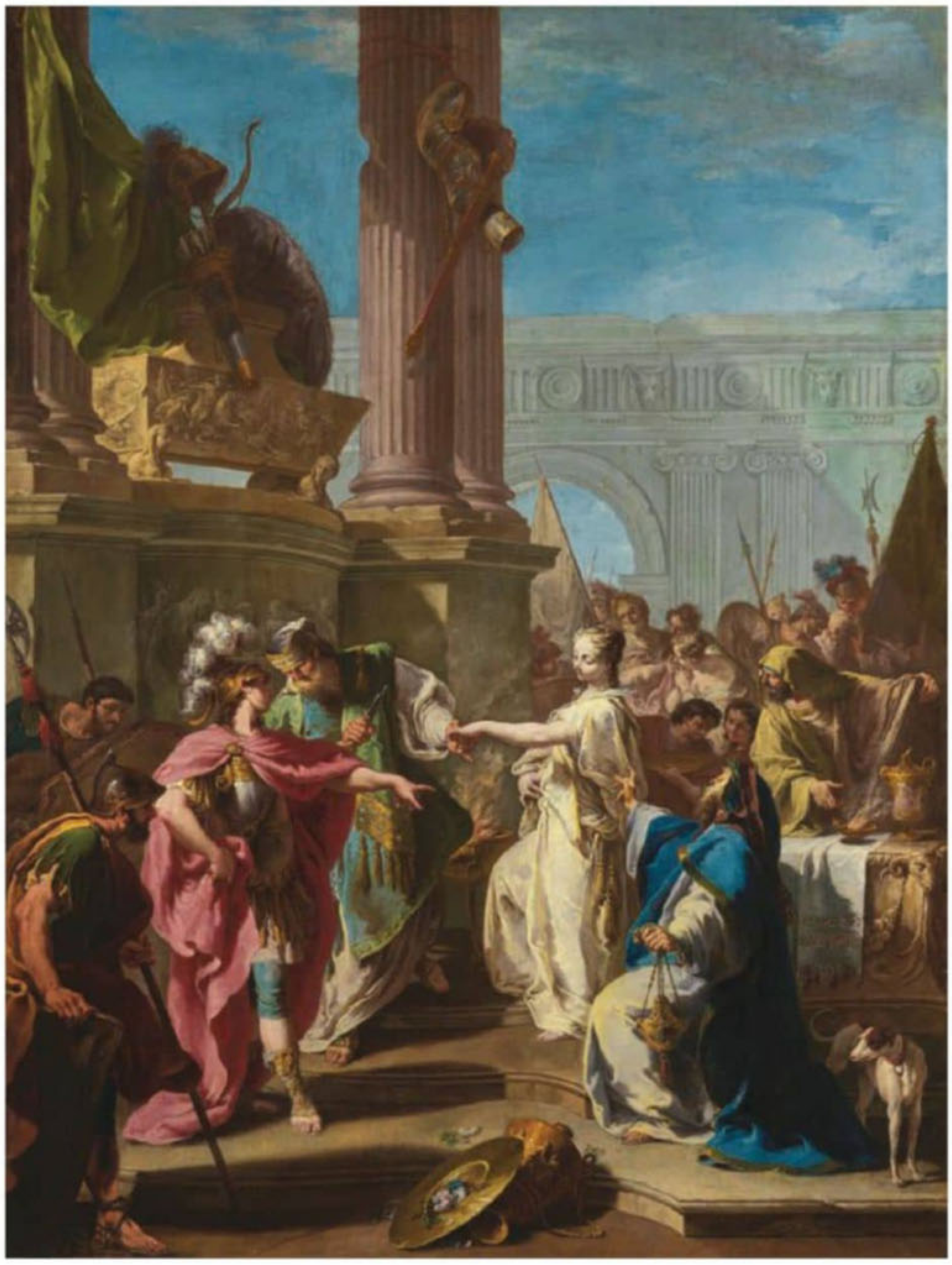


IMAGE: J Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

> "It's not an easy road up from the Underworld – the gods beneath the earth are always quicker to receive than to let go."
>
> **Aeschylus, *Persians***

LEFT Giovanni Battista Pittoni, *The Sacrifice of Polyxena*. Oil on canvas, c.1733-1734.

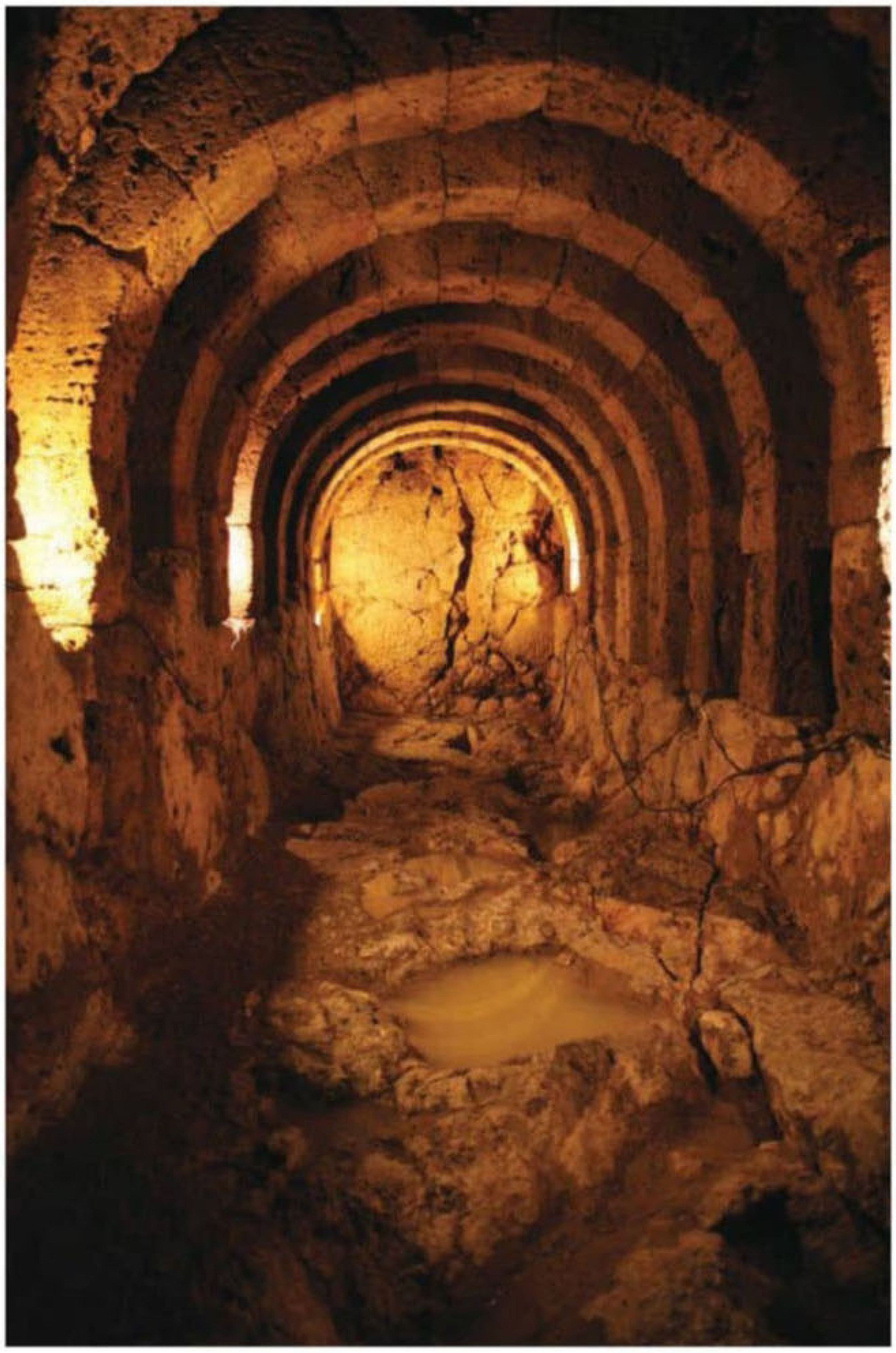
Cimon's hero-shrine was a cenotaph, but more commonly the dead were thought to have close connections with their last resting place. Except at Sparta, Greek cemeteries were sited next to roads outside the city walls – apart from the world of the living, but easily accessible – where mourners would leave offerings of flowers or special drinks or cake. Vase paintings show family members approaching the grave marker, while the deceased stands out of sight behind it. In some, a small winged figure representing the soul hovers next to the head of the deceased; but whether Greeks imagined that souls were really so diminutive, or whether artists drew them small to emphasise their relative powerlessness, we cannot tell.

Certainly, however, Athenians believed that once a year in late January or early February the dead returned to stalk the streets of their old city. This was the day of the Chytrai (the 'Day of Pots'), the third day of the winter Anthesteria (the 'Festival of Flowering'), when, after Dionysiac parades and feasting celebrating new vegetative growth, Athenians boiled up a pot of vegetables, which they left as offerings to Hermes, the god who conducted dead souls to – or, in this case, from – the Underworld. For, on this day, the gates of Hades swung open, the dead swarmed out, and prudent Athenian householders, chewing buckthorn for protection, smeared their doors with pitch to stop malignant spirits entering, while priests and priestesses made sure that every shrine and temple door was tightly closed. Only at sunset could the ghosts be driven out, when – addressing especially the Keres, the malignant dead – heads of households toured their properties proclaiming 'Be gone, you Keres! The Anthesteria is done!'

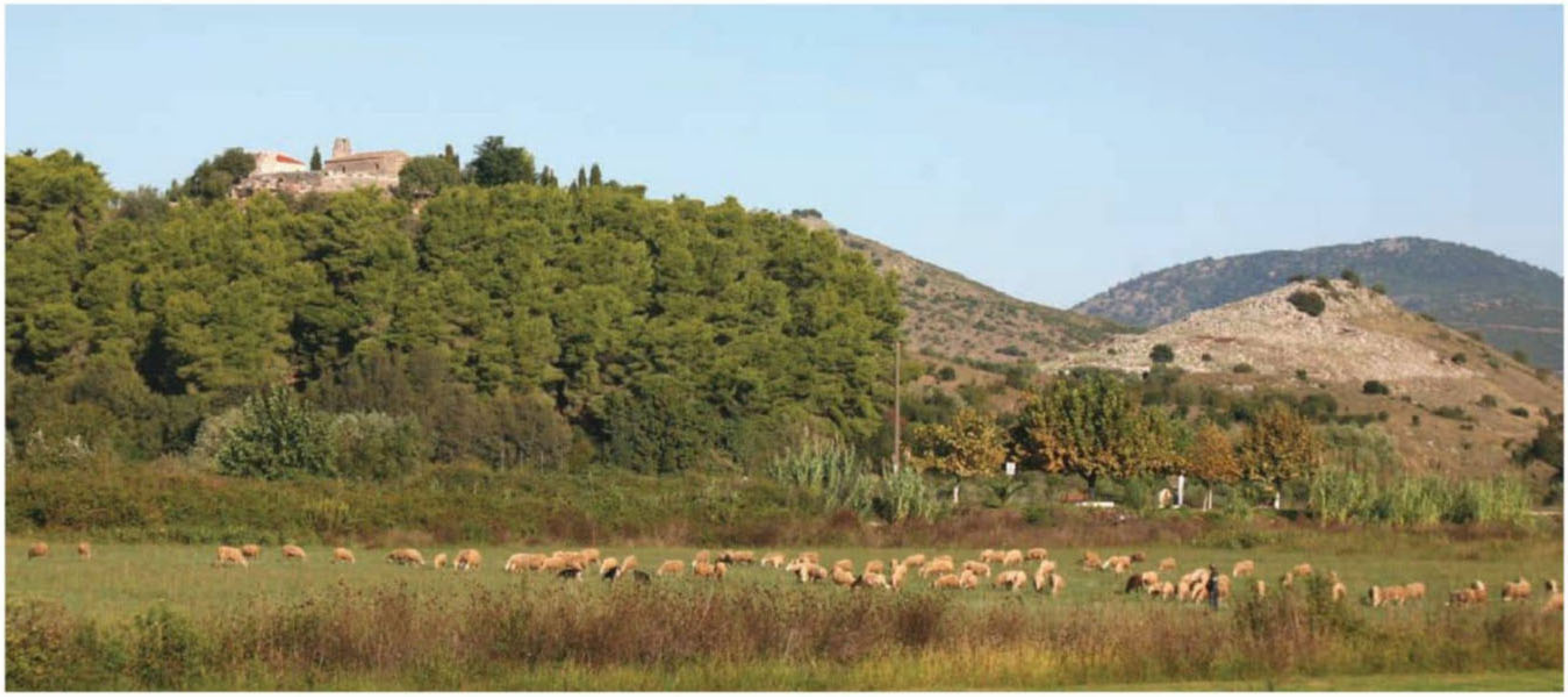
While the dead sometimes had to be chased off, occasionally in times of trouble individuals or communities might wish to summon them. Extant Greek tragedy imagines two such cases, where the methods used are similar. In Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Orestes, Electra, and their attendants gather at the tomb of their murdered father, Agamemnon, pour libations and beat the earth while chanting verses which, they hope, will rouse his ghost to help them in their mission of revenge to kill their mother, Clytemnestra. Their séance is unsuccessful, but another dramatic necromancy in *Persians* (also by Aeschylus) sees Persia's Queen Mother and her retinue of elders raise the spirit of her dead husband Darius from his grave. Once more the process is achieved with offerings (this time of special cake), earth-beating, and chanted verses, but when Darius first appears, bewildered by his reawakening ('It's not an easy road up from the Underworld – the gods beneath the earth are always quicker to receive than to let go'), he seems to be even more ignorant of current affairs than those consulting him. Only with time does his prophetic memory return, and then his message is not what the Persians had hoped to hear.

This is always a danger when people try to learn the future. Yet Greeks' quest to do so led to a proliferation of oracles, and while most were thought to offer conduits to the gods, many were connected to the dead. Even the most famous oracle of all, at Delphi, was delivered at a burial site – the grave of Python, the serpent-guardian slain by Apollo, its name commemorated in the title of the priestess Pythia and the Pythian Games celebrated partly in its honour. Other oracles, such as that of Amphiareus north-east of Athens, or of Trophonius at Lebadeia in nearby Boeotia, were connected with specific dead heroes. But at others, such as Phigalia in the rugged mountains of Arcadia, Taenarum at the southern tip of the Mani Peninsula, and Ephyra, the wider company of the dead might be consulted – and not just by the likes of Odysseus. Herodotus records how a 6th century BC Corinthian tyrant sent envoys to Ephyra to ask his dead wife, Melissa, where she had buried a large sum of money. At first she refused to tell him, and it was only when he collected their most sumptuous dresses from the women of Corinth and burned them as an offering to her that Melissa revealed the hiding place. Over six centuries later, writers were still associating Ephyra with the Underworld – the historian Plutarch and the traveller Pausanias both believed that it was here that Theseus descended on his quest to abduct Persephone, the goddess of the dead.

Today, visitors to Ephyra can follow him – part of the way – descending underground by a vertiginous ladder to a vaulted chamber which some archaeologists associate with the Oracle of the Dead. As evidence, they cite statuettes of Persephone; foundations of buildings they identify as dormitories; remains of hallucinogenic lupin seeds, perhaps used in ritual; a labyrinth for disorientating drugged petitioners; and pieces of machinery which they claim were used by priests to stage levitations and theatrical raisings of the dead. Others, however, are more sceptical. Since the hill was levelled in the 4th or 3rd century BC, its buildings burnt by the Romans in 168 BC, and both a church of John the Baptist and a farmhouse erected in the 18th century AD, little of the original ancient Greek site remains. Yet that there was something here is clear. Perhaps the only way to learn precisely what it was is to climb down the ladder, beat the ground, and offer cake – and pose our questions to whoever might appear.



ABOVE The vaulted subterranean chamber at Ephyra has been associated with the Oracle of the Dead by some archaeologists.
BELOW Ephyra today: on the left, a church of John the Baptist and a farmhouse (both built in the 18th century AD) stand on top of the hill, the site of ancient Ephyra. On the the right are the remains of the acropolis of Cichyrus.

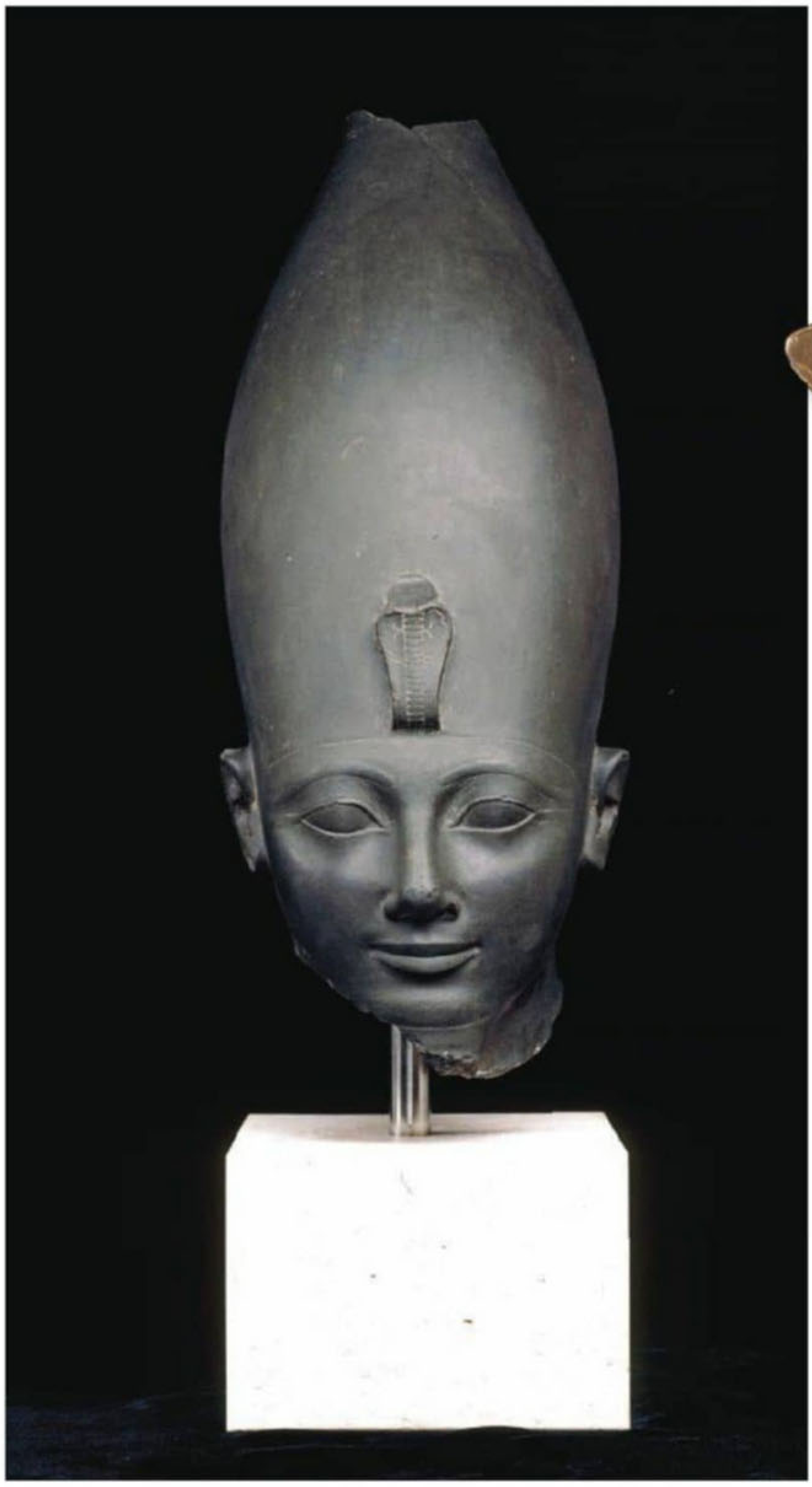


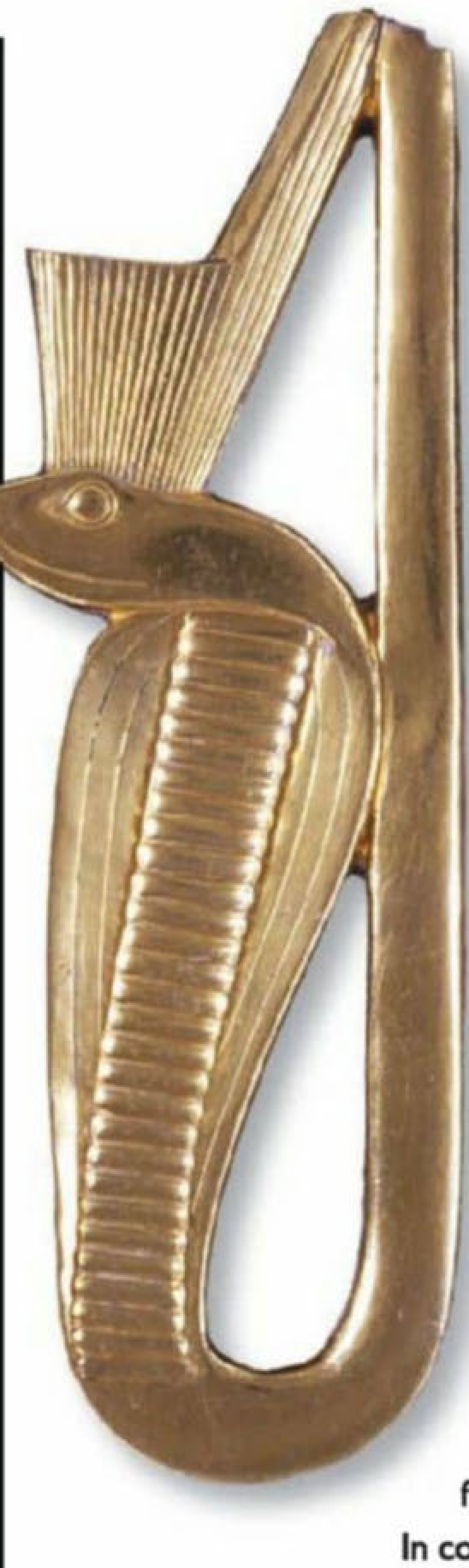
IMAGES: D Stuttard

ON SHOW

Exhibitions from around the world

Many museums and galleries around the world are now reopening with safety measures in place, such as compulsory booking and limits on visitor numbers. Closures are still a possibility, and the dates listed below may have changed since we went to print. Check the websites and social-media accounts of the institutions for the most up-to-date information, bookings, and, in many cases, a chance to explore their collections online.





FAR LEFT Head of the pharaoh Thutmose III, from Karnak, Thebes. Green siltstone, *c.*1479-1457 BC. *Size: 60.5 x 19 x 31cm*
LEFT A furniture-fitting in the shape of the uraeus. Gold, *c.*664-332 BC. *Size: 17 x 5.5 x 1cm*

PHARAOH: KING OF EGYPT

Tarragona, Spain

The pharaohs of ancient Egypt had many roles to fill, among them strategic military commanders, fearless fighters, divine representatives of the many gods in the Egyptian pantheon, dutiful high priests, and protectors of the *maat*, the divine order of the world. They carefully constructed their identities to reflect these roles and projected their power through statues and monuments, which make use of a set of royal symbols and certain poses.

This exhibition of more than 100 ancient Egyptian artefacts from the collections of the British Museum explores the images of the all-powerful pharaoh. One important signifier of royal status was the uraeus, an upright cobra figure worn as part of the pharaoh's crown. In coronation scenes, pharaohs appear surrounded by gods, highlighting the divine nature of their role, and in some stelae they are depicted with their arms folded, a pose that imitates the god Osiris.

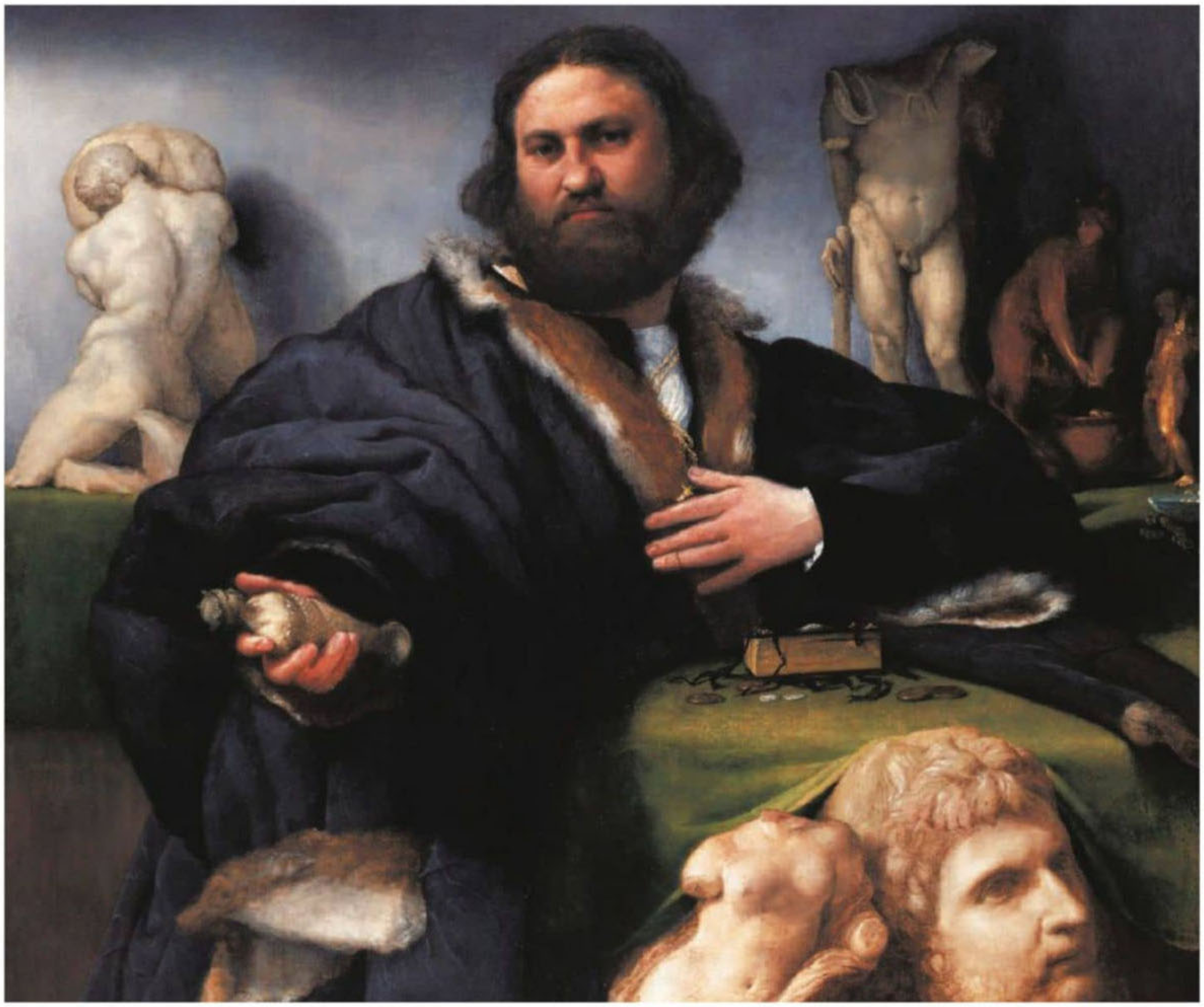
Of course, the reality was not always as neat as the statues and other works try to suggest. There were internal tensions between Upper and Lower Egypt, as well as civil wars, and Egypt suffered defeats by both the Roman and the Nubian armies.

A variety of figures ruled Egypt, too, and over a huge expanse of time from approximately 3000 BC to 30 BC and the Roman conquest. Some were women, and some – like the Macedonian king Alexander the Great – were not Egyptian. Yet the royal symbols used were the same, continuing a powerful and ancient visual lineage.

Among the works are exceptional examples of Egyptian statuary – such as a green siltstone head of Thutmose III, a venerated pharaoh who expanded the empire – as well as reliefs from temples, tiles from palaces, jewellery, and ritual objects.

CAIXAFORUM TARRAGONA
Until 14 March 2021
https://caixaforum.es/es/tarragona/exposiciones

IMAGES: © Trustees of the British Museum



MASTERPIECES FROM BUCKINGHAM PALACE

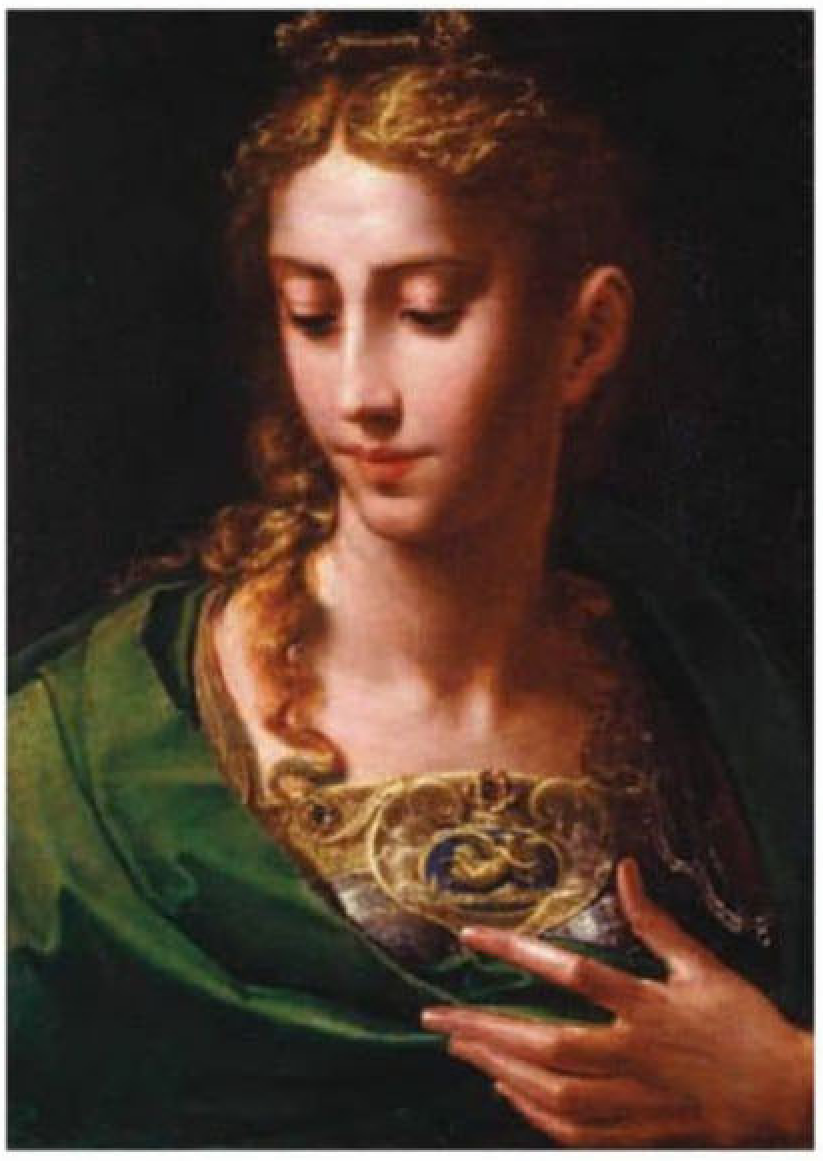
London, UK

One highlight of the summer opening of the State Rooms of Buckingham Palace is the Picture Gallery, where spectacular works from the Royal Collection, amassed by monarchs over the centuries, are hung. This year, the Picture Gallery has been emptied for the first time since it was redecorated in 1976, in preparation for a major programme of works. The removal of these masterpieces, including Old Master paintings that have been displayed in the room since it was created for George IV by architect John Nash in the 1820s, is an opportunity to see them up close in a gallery setting.

The 65 paintings that make up this exhibition (34 of which were acquired by George IV) are considered highlights of the Royal Collection, and include work by Titian, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Canaletto. It is the first time these works have been brought together for a gallery exhibition, and their new presentation invites consideration of topics such as why the works were so highly prized. Other themes include the artists' technical mastery of paint – in, for example, the thin applications of pigment that conjure the translucence of skin in Rubens' *Self-Portrait* (1623).

Some of the paintings make use of illusionistic design – for instance, adding false windows – to create an effective sense of realism. In Lorenzo Lotto's portrait of Andrea Odoni (1527), he positions the sitter so that he appears to offer a statue of the Greek goddess Artemis to the viewer. Others instead opt for an idealism indebted to classical art, as exemplified by Parmigianino's *Pallas Athene* (*c.*1531-1538) and Guido Reni's *Cleopatra with the Asp* (*c.*1628).

IMAGES: Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020



ABOVE
Lorenzo Lotto,
Andrea Odoni.
Oil on canvas, 1527.
Size: 104.3 x 116.8cm
LEFT Parmigianino,
Pallas Athene. Oil on
canvas, *c.*1531-1538.
Size: 64 x 45.4cm

The exhibition also explores the history of Picture Gallery from the 1762 acquisition of Buckingham House by George III and Queen Charlotte, whose arrangements of a mix of Dutch, Flemish, and Italian paintings still influence the displays in the room.

THE QUEEN'S GALLERY, BUCKINGHAM PALACE
Until January 2022
www.rct.uk

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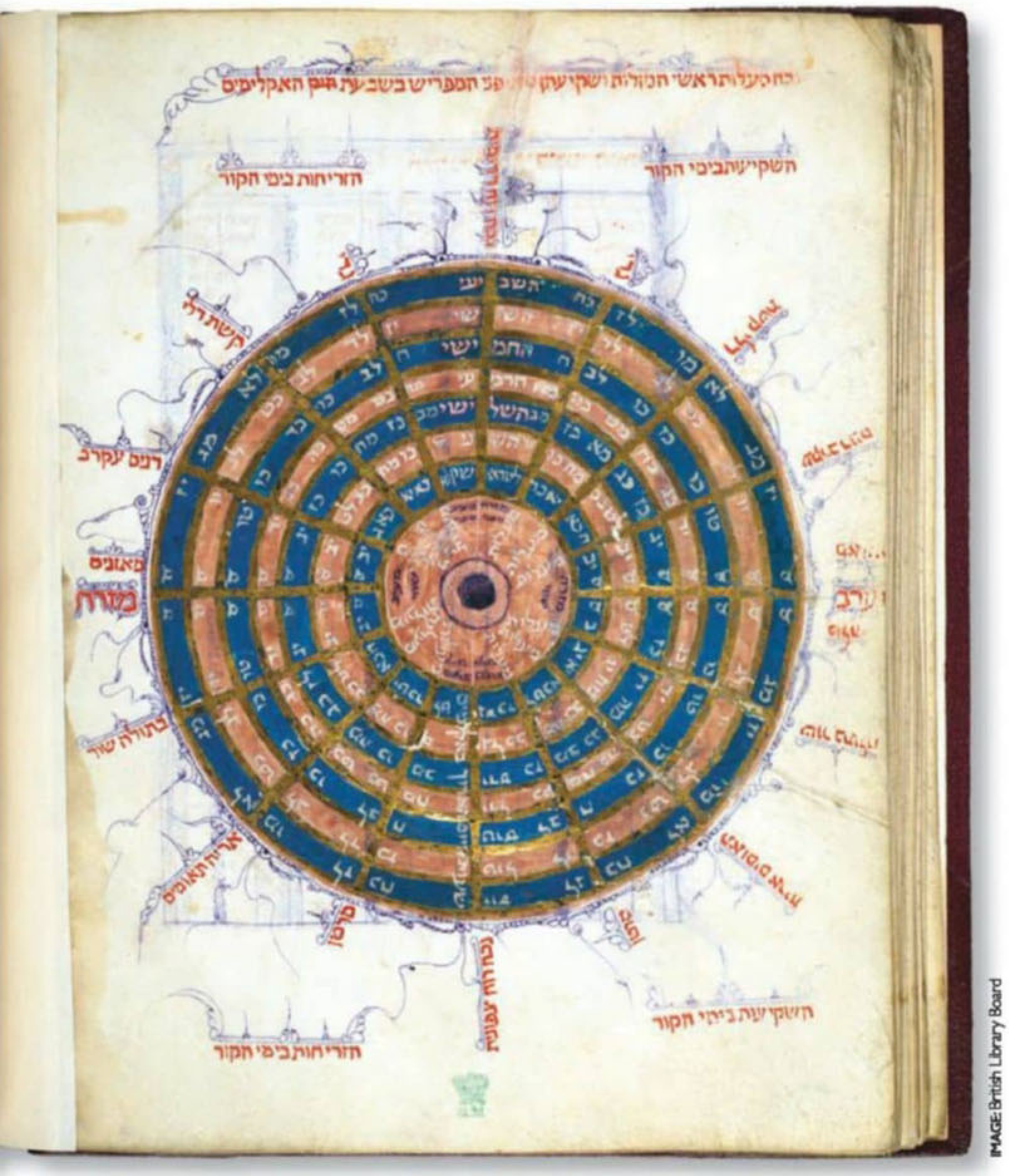

IMAGE: British Library Board

UNITED KINGDOM

HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS: JOURNEYS OF THE WRITTEN WORD

A selection of significant manuscripts from across Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and China are on display in this exhibition at the British Library. It explores the history and traditions of Jewish people around the world, their interactions, influences, and exchanges of knowledge with their neighbours, and how the written word can bring people together over considerable distances. The earliest manuscript on show is the First Gaster Bible, dating from the 10th century, but it is not only important religious texts that are on display: there are works on science and astronomy (a page from a 15th-century series of calendrical and astronomical tables is shown above), philosophy, magic and alchemy, and more, containing beautiful illuminations and scientific diagrams, and frequently revealing personal stories. All the manuscripts in this exhibition have been digitised, so they can also be seen online at *www.bl.uk/manuscripts/*.

BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON
Until 11 April 2021
www.bl.uk/events/hebrew-manuscripts

BILL BRANDT | HENRY MOORE

Exploring the careers of, and many connections between, the photographer Bill Brandt (1904-1983) and sculptor Henry Moore (1898-1986) this show brings together a range of works by both artists that reflect their interests in similar subjects, among them rock formations and geology, and megalithic sites such as Stonehenge, which is featured both in Brandt's photographs (for example, the 1947 gelatin silver print *Stonehenge*, pictured below) and Moore's lithographs. The artworks reveal how Brandt and Moore both focused on ordinary people, labour, and the home, up to and during the Second World War, but then later turned to the open landscape and nature. The exhibition is organised by the Yale Center for British Art, USA, where it will run from 15 April to 18 July 2021, and in partnership with the Hepworth Wakefield (where it was on view earlier this year).

IMAGE: Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York © Bill Brandt/Bill Brandt Archive Ltd

SAINSBURY CENTRE FOR VISUAL ART, NORWICH
Until 7 March 2021
https://sainsburycentre.ac.uk

UNITED STATES

LOVE, LIFE, DEATH, AND DESIRE: AN INSTALLATION OF THE CENTER'S COLLECTIONS

Damien Hirst first exhibited his installation *In and Out of Love (Butterfly Paintings and Ashtrays)* 30 years ago, a time when London was on the rise as a centre for contemporary art. The installation helped Hirst gain prominence as a Young British Artist. For an exhibition marking this milestone, Hirst's installation is shown in its entirety, along with other historic and contemporary works from the Yale Center for British Art's collection that address themes seen in Hirst's art, like love and death, beauty and suffering, permanence and fragility. The selection of works on view includes pieces that draw from ancient tales of love and death, such as the tragic heroine of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dido, Queen of Carthage, as figured in Henry Fuseli's 1781 painting (above right).

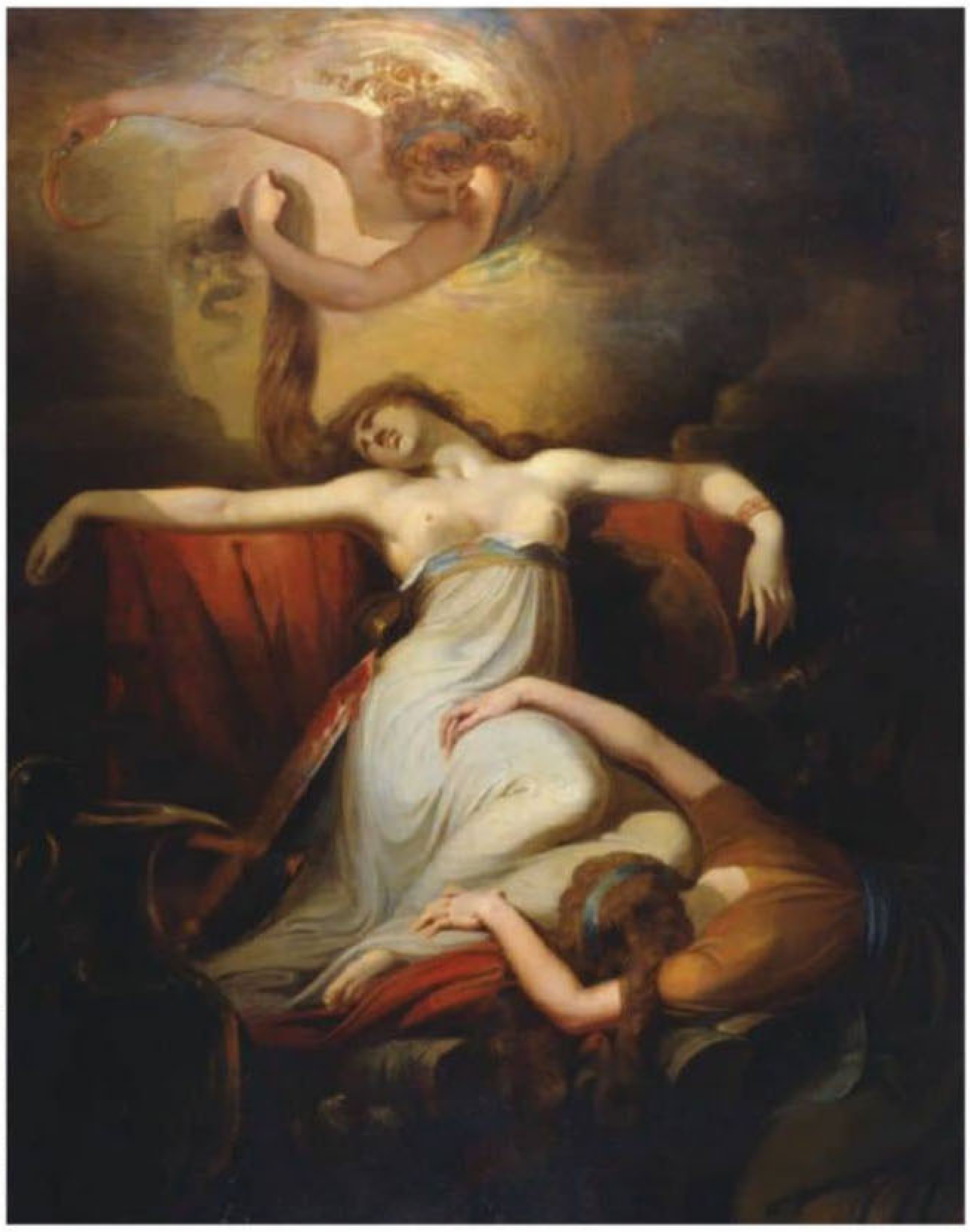

IMAGE: Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
Until 28 February 2021
https://britishart.yale.edu/

ARTE DEL MAR: ARTISTIC EXCHANGE IN THE CARIBBEAN

Indigenous communities both in the Antilles archipelago in the Caribbean Sea and, across the waters, in the mainland countries of Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, and Honduras, participated in a rich artistic exchange with one another. Drawing on recent research into ritual knowledge, ceremony, and political power, this exhibition showcases the stunning works of the Taíno civilisations, who endeavoured to express the power of their deities and ancestors through their creations. Highlights include wooden sculptures from ancient Puerto Rico, and pendants and other objects, crafted from luxury imported materials, that would be used by leaders in ceremonies; one spectacular example, an elaborate gold pendant made by the Tairona civilisation of Colombia, is shown below left. Such materials, including greenstone, shell, gold, and marble, illustrate the trade connections that linked Caribbean peoples before the 16th century.

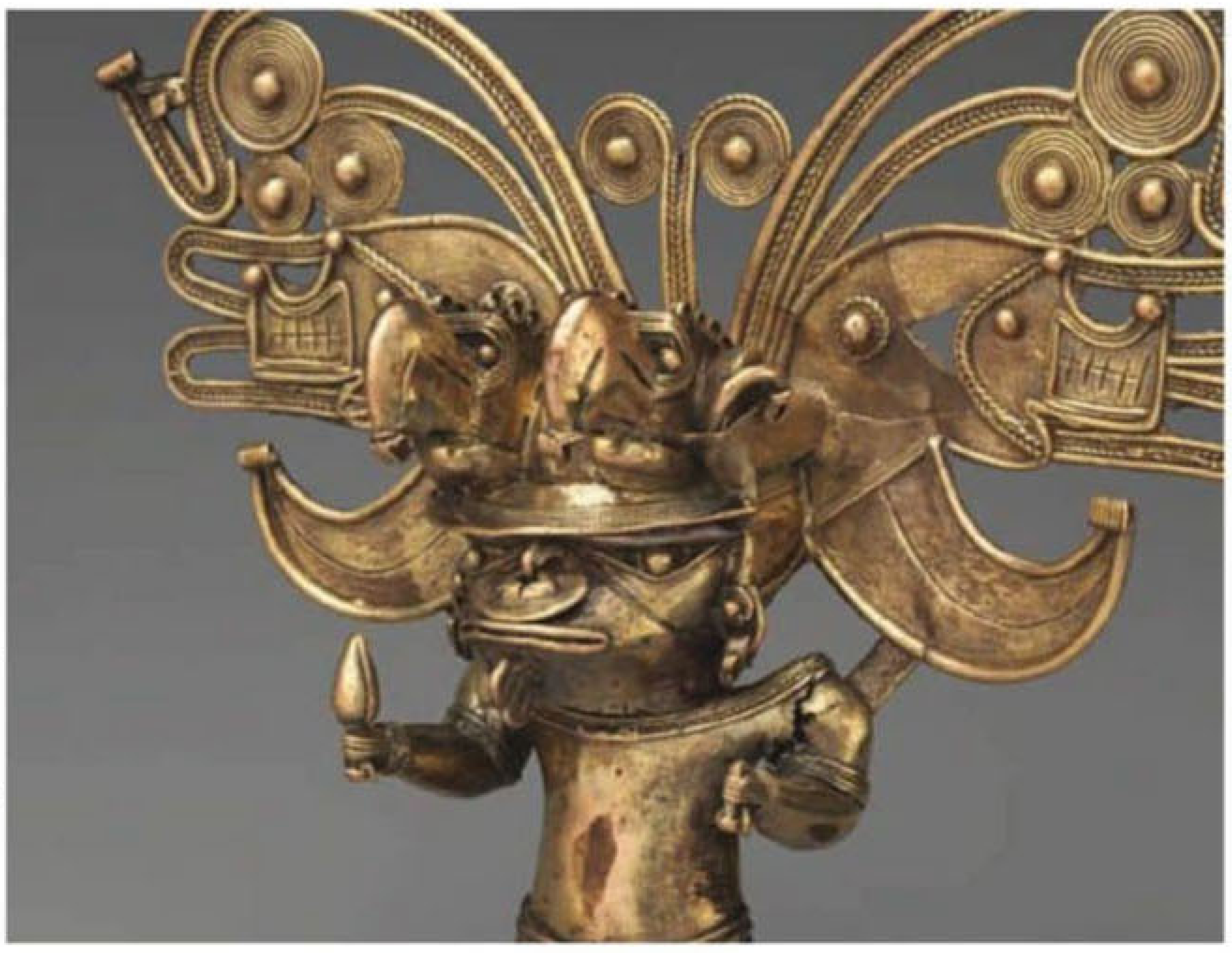

IMAGE: courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK
Until 27 June 2021
www.metmuseum.org

SALEM STORIES

Ranging from 'Always Indigenous' to 'Zoology', this exhibition presents 26 stories from the city of Salem that explore its past, dating back millennia to the Native communities who first lived on the land. Though Salem is best known for its witch trials, it was also the place from which Alexander Graham Bell completed the first successful long-distance telephone call in 1877, and where the Parker Brothers produced the famous boardgame *Monopoly*. Paintings, sculpture, textiles, manuscripts, natural history specimens, and many other objects – including a tobacco pipe with an oyster growing out of it, found in Salem Harbor – tell the story of the city's past and its international connections.

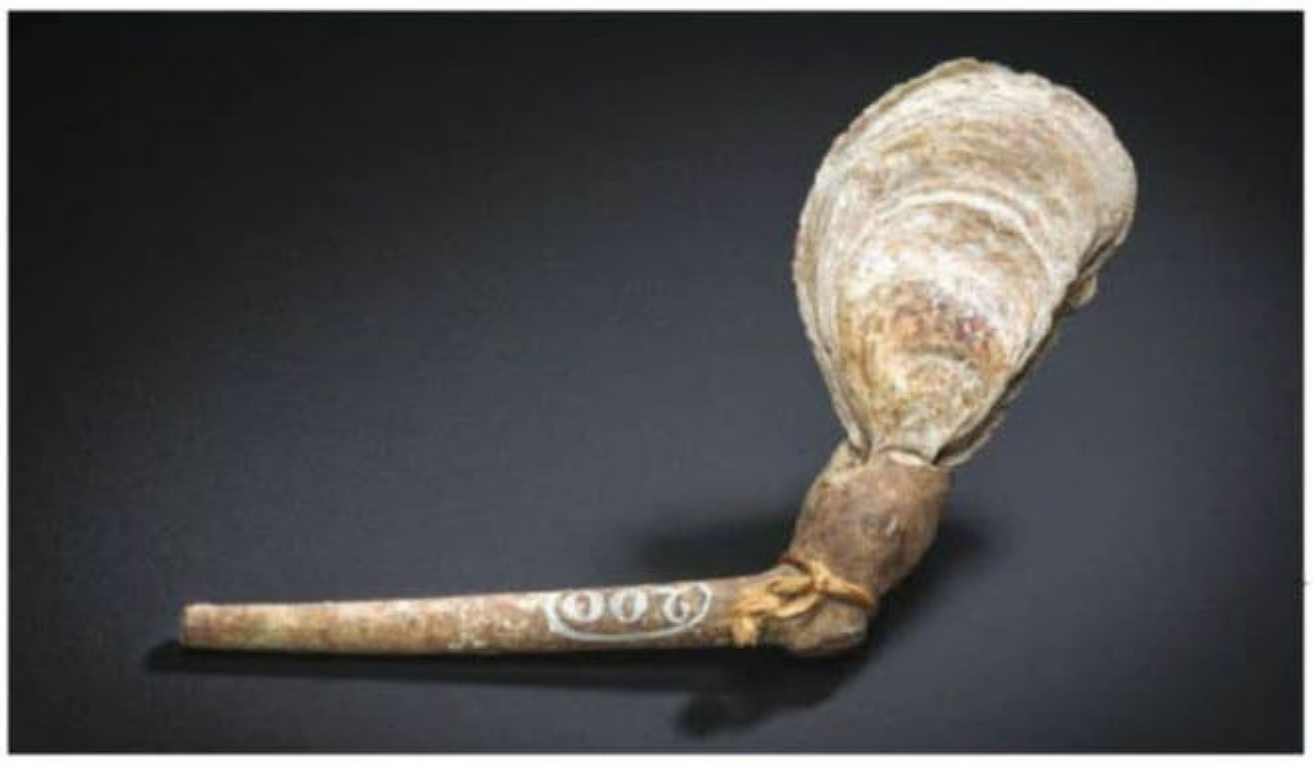

IMAGE: © Peabody Essex Museum. Photography by Walter Silver

PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
Until 3 October 2021
www.pem.org

BELGIUM

ALEPPO: A 5,000-YEAR JOURNEY

This immersive digital exhibition gives visitors the chance to walk through 3D models of the main monuments in the historic centre of Aleppo, and encounter the damage inflicted on the city by the Syrian civil war. Some buildings have now been safeguarded virtually, with heritage digitisation teams from Iconem creating 3D models of major monuments based on fieldwork in 2017.

BOGHOSSIAN FOUNDATION – VILLA EMPAIN, BRUSSELS
Until 31 January
www.villaempain.com

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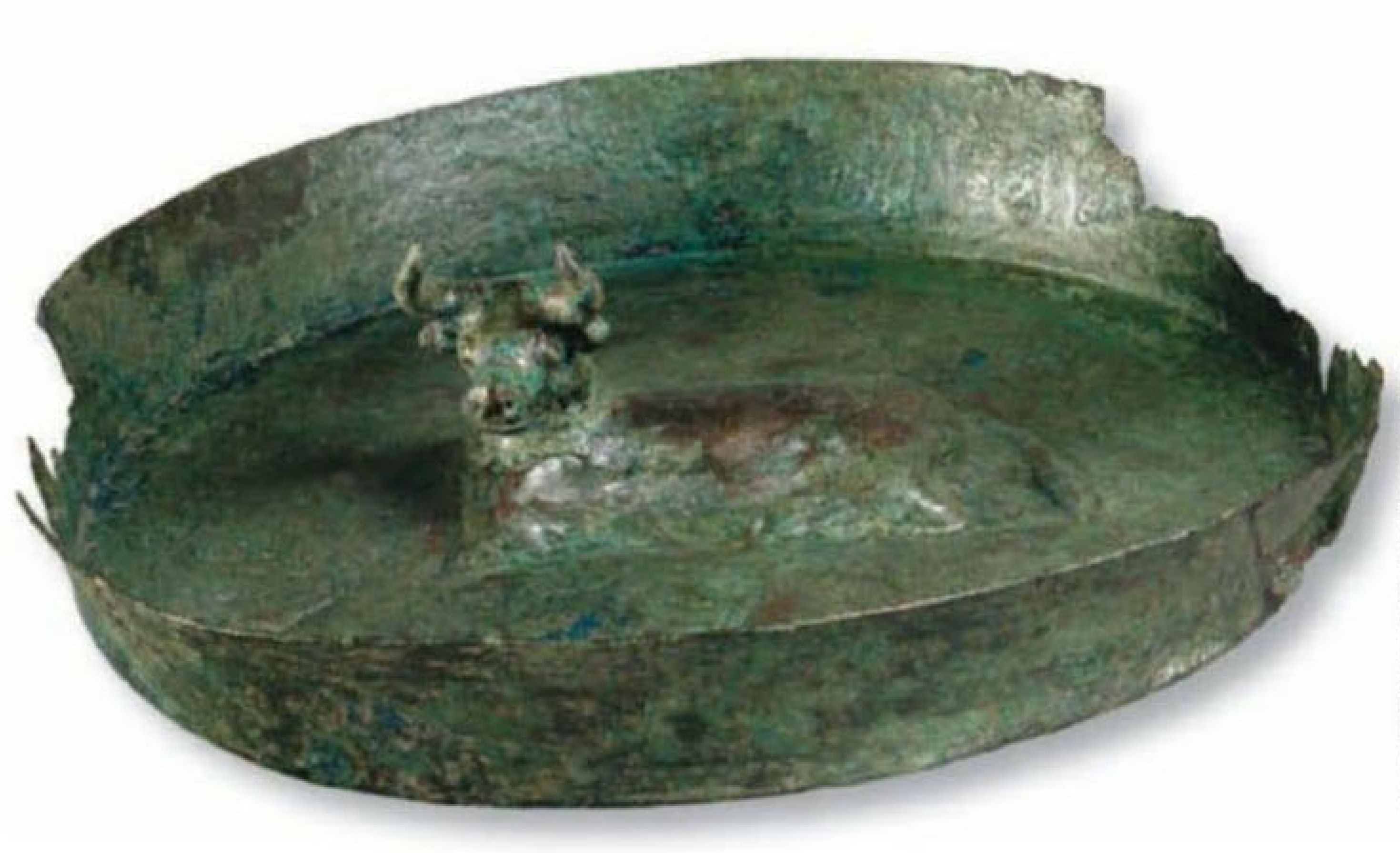


IMAGE © RMN-GP (Musée du Louvre)/F Raux

FRANCE

LOUVRE-DESIGN

In 2020, the city of Lille in northern France held the title of World Design Capital. To celebrate this accolade, the Louvre-Lens, in the nearby city of Lens, is staging an exhibition that showcases historic and modern design, and the ways in which it responds to a variety of challenges, be they social, economic, or environmental. Particular attention is paid to crafts that have thrived in the Hauts-de-France region, like glass, ceramics, and textiles. Works from the collections of the Louvre, from the ancient world up until 1850, are shown along with more recent creations, with highlights including a large bronze dish with a bull lying in its centre from ancient Iran (*c.*2200-1800 BC; pictured above), paired with a 2004 ceramic bowl by Hella Jongerius with a hippopotamus in the middle.

LOUVRE-LENS
Until 1 February 2021
www.louvrelens.fr

GERMANY

VOYAGE: A JOURNEY THROUGH FRENCH DRAWING

With travel restricted across the world, this exhibition highlights the possibility of travel through art, specifically through French drawings of the 17th and 18th centuries. Young artists travelled as part of their training and others accompanied scientific expeditions, which meant that, while some were attempting accurate documentation of what they saw, others let their compositions be influenced by the traditions of landscape painting as well as their imaginations, as shown by this small selection of works from the Kupferstichkabinett's collection of more than 1,000 French drawings (some rediscovered through a research and digitisation project). The locations include Russian landscapes, the temples of Egypt, and the ruins of ancient Rome, as seen in Jean-Pierre Houël's gouache and aquarelle depiction of *The Amphitheatre of Catania on Sicily* (*c.*1776-1779; below left).

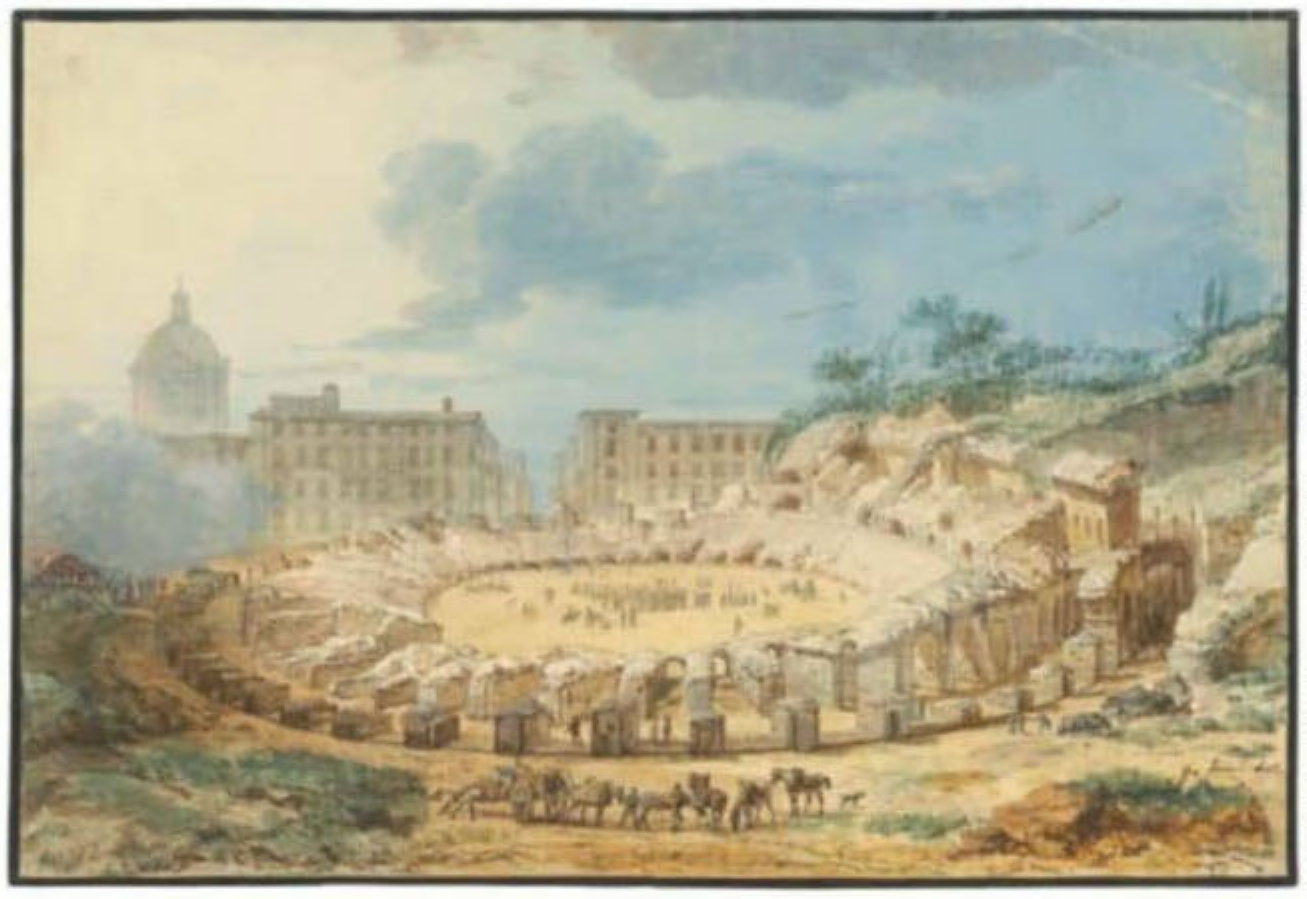


IMAGE © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett/Dietmar Katz

GEMÄLDEGALERIE, BERLIN
Until 31 January 2021
www.smb.museum

GLADIATORS – HEROES OF THE COLOSSEUM

Gladiatorial combat was a popular spectator sport in ancient Rome, and the vast amphitheatres scattered across the empire stand as testament to the large crowds who once watched the bloody fights. Different types of fighter specialised in using different weapons and armour, some of which have survived in the archaeological record, along with objects like oil lamps and figurines (for example, the 1st-century AD clay murmillo, right) that depict gladiators. Such artefacts are on show, along with various reconstructions, in this exhibition that investigates the people who were gladiators, what went on behind the scenes, and the place of women in the games.

IMAGE: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM HAMBURG
Until 28 February 2021
https://amh.de

GREECE

ANTIQUARIANISM AND PHILHELLENISM: THE THANASSIS AND MARINA MARTINOS COLLECTION

The year 2021 marks the bicentenary of the start of the Greek Revolution in 1821. This period also saw the rise of the Philhellenic movement in art, which drew from ancient Greek heritage. As this exhibition explores, after the founding of the independent Greek state, Greek Neoclassical artists were keen to highlight their unbroken link to the arts of ancient Greece. Ancient works are paired with related Neoclassical oil paintings and sculptures by 19th-century artists from Greece and elsewhere in Europe. Highlights include Peter von Hess's 1829 painting *Greeks Fighting among Ancient Ruins.*

MUSEUM OF CYCLADIC ART, ATHENS
Until 5 April 2021
www.cycladic.gr

MEXICO

PASSERSBY 04: ANNI ALBERS

For the fourth instalment in their series devoted to 'Passersby' (artists from different disciplines who have stayed in and been influenced by Mexico), the Museo Jumex presents an exhibition focused on the great textile artist Anni Albers (1899-1994). In the 1930s, Anni Albers left Germany with her husband Josef and moved to the USA. While living there, both artists travelled often to Mexico. Anni carefully studied the textile traditions of many different cultures and purchased work in Mexico for the collection of the Black Mountain College, where she taught. But it was more than just different textiles that inspired her, as this exhibition shows. Together, Anni and Josef explored archaeological sites like Monte Albán (*Anni Albers at Monte Albán,* a photograph taken by Josef Albers in 1939, is shown below) and these spectacular ancient ruins influenced her designs. The connections between ancient and contemporary Mexico and Anni Albers' work are highlighted through documents, objects, photography, and works by the artist.

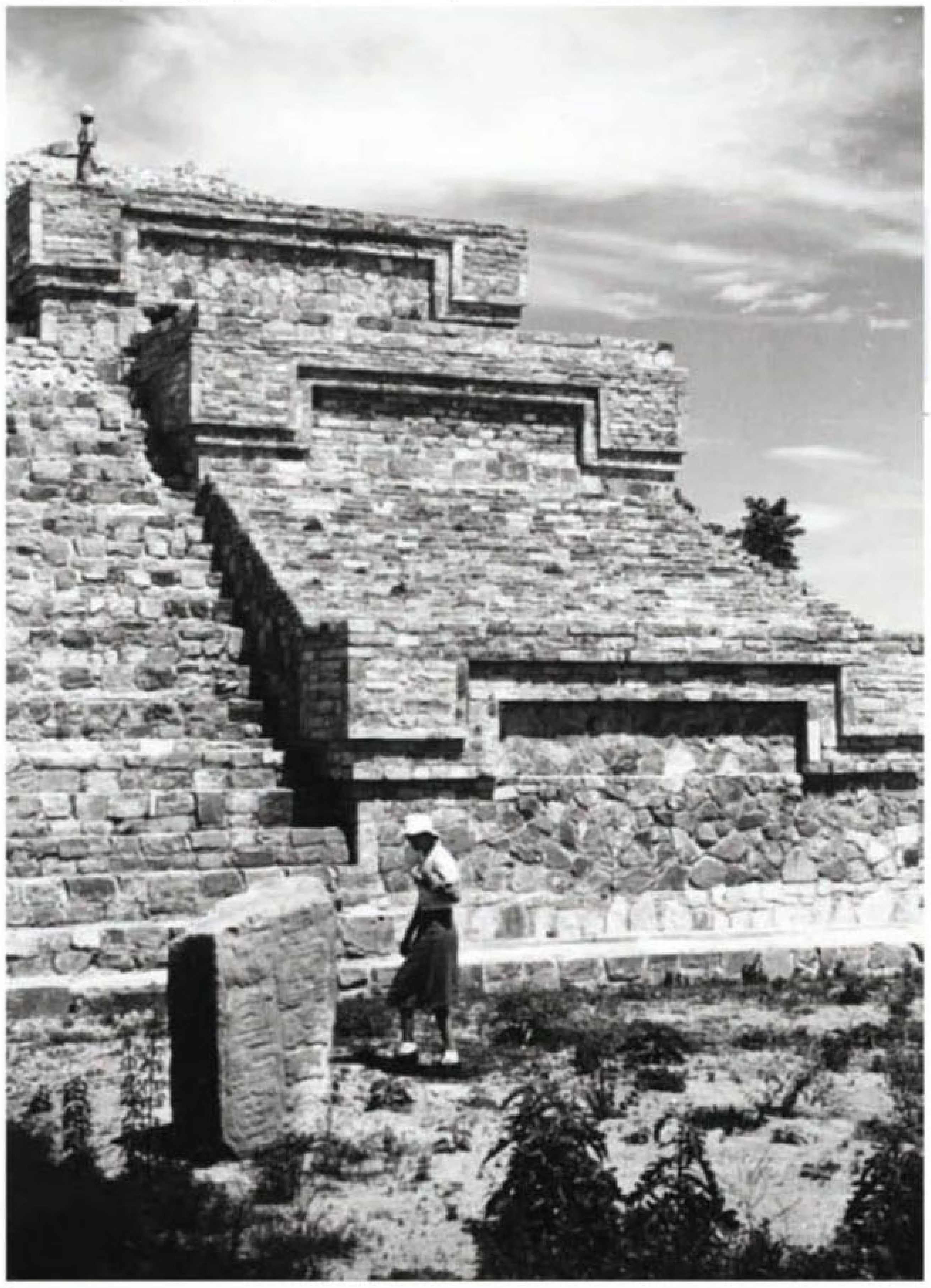


IMAGE: Tim Nighswander/Imaging4Art © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation/Artists Rights Society, NY; D R © Josef Albers/ARS/VG Bild-Kunst/SOMAAP/México/2020

MUSEO JUMEX, MEXICO CITY

Until 28 February 2021

www.fundacionjumex.org

NETHERLANDS

RETURN TRIP TO THE PAST: PRORAIL AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Large-scale infrastructure projects often go hand-in-hand with archaeological discoveries, and the construction of the Netherlands' first railway in the second half of the 19th century was no exception. At first, finds were unearthed during the construction of the railways, but the Valletta Treaty in 1992 introduced a legal requirement for archaeological study of a site before construction. This small exhibition investigates the relationship between archaeology and railway works – particularly the work of ProRail, which manages the railways and was one of the first large organisations in the Netherlands to set up an archaeology department some 25 years ago – and presents some archaeological highlights found along the tracks over the last 180 years. These include a Carolingian sword dredged from the moat of Bastion Deuteren in 1896, a 17th-century telescope (the oldest in the Netherlands) excavated in Delft in 2014, and a 14th-century knight's glove also found in Delft (shown above), which was probably lost during the siege of the city.

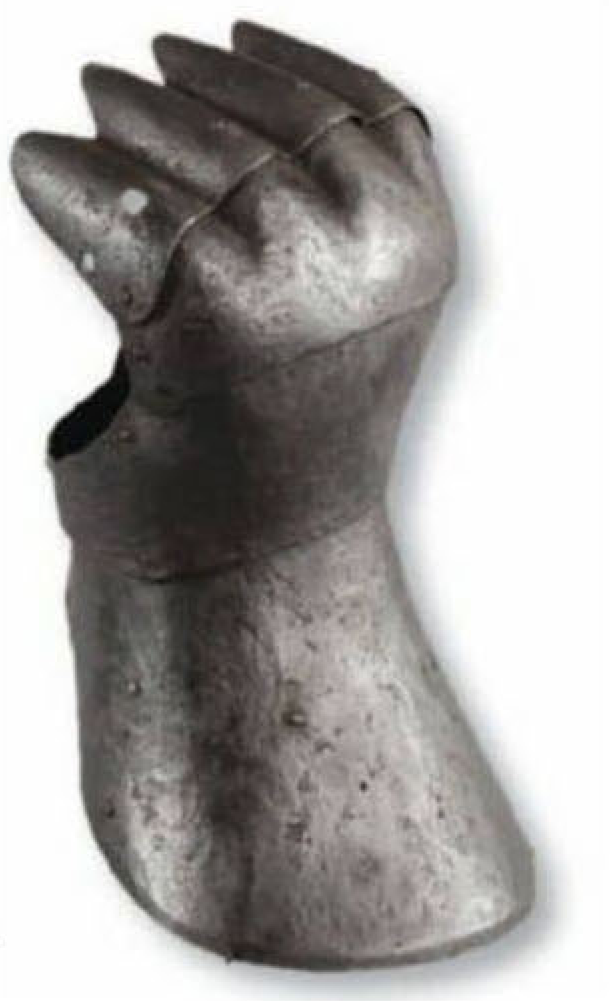


IMAGE: © Municipality of Delft

RIJKSMUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN, LEIDEN

Until 22 August 2021

www.rmo.nl

SPAIN

ART AND MYTH: THE GODS OF THE PRADO

The rich array of stories from Greco-Roman mythology have been used as a sourcebook for many artists in classical antiquity and beyond. Gods, heroes, nymphs, satyrs, and maenads fill tales which delve into human vices and virtues. Works ranging from the 1st century BC to the 19th century give an overview of these myths across art history, as represented in the collections of Madrid's Prado Museum, with examples included that use myth to explore ideas about love, beauty, fate, and masculinity and femininity. Paintings by Rubens, Zurbarán, and Ribera are presented alongside ancient masterpieces, such as a Roman marble carving (shown below) of Prometheus and Athena creating the first man.

CAIXAFORUM BARCELONA

Until 14 March 2021

https://caixaforum.es/es/barcelona

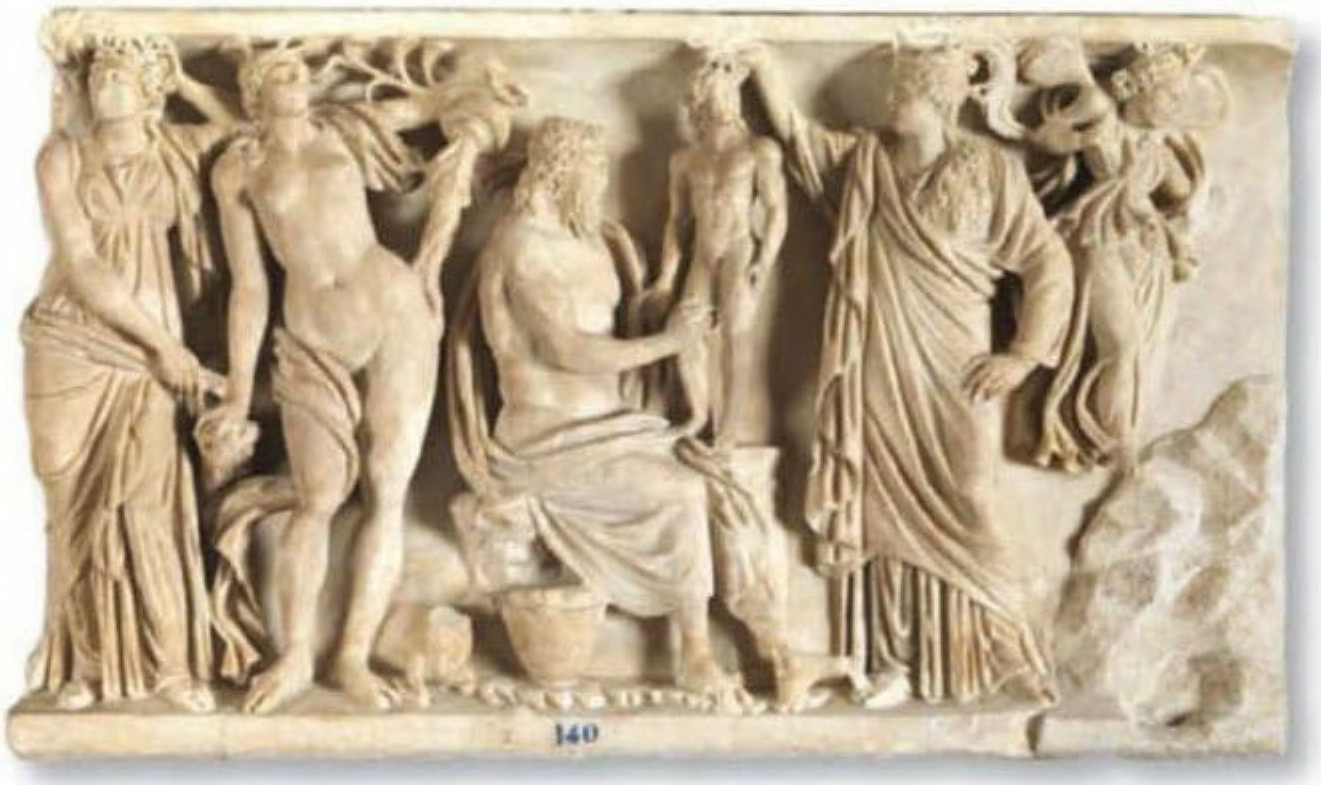
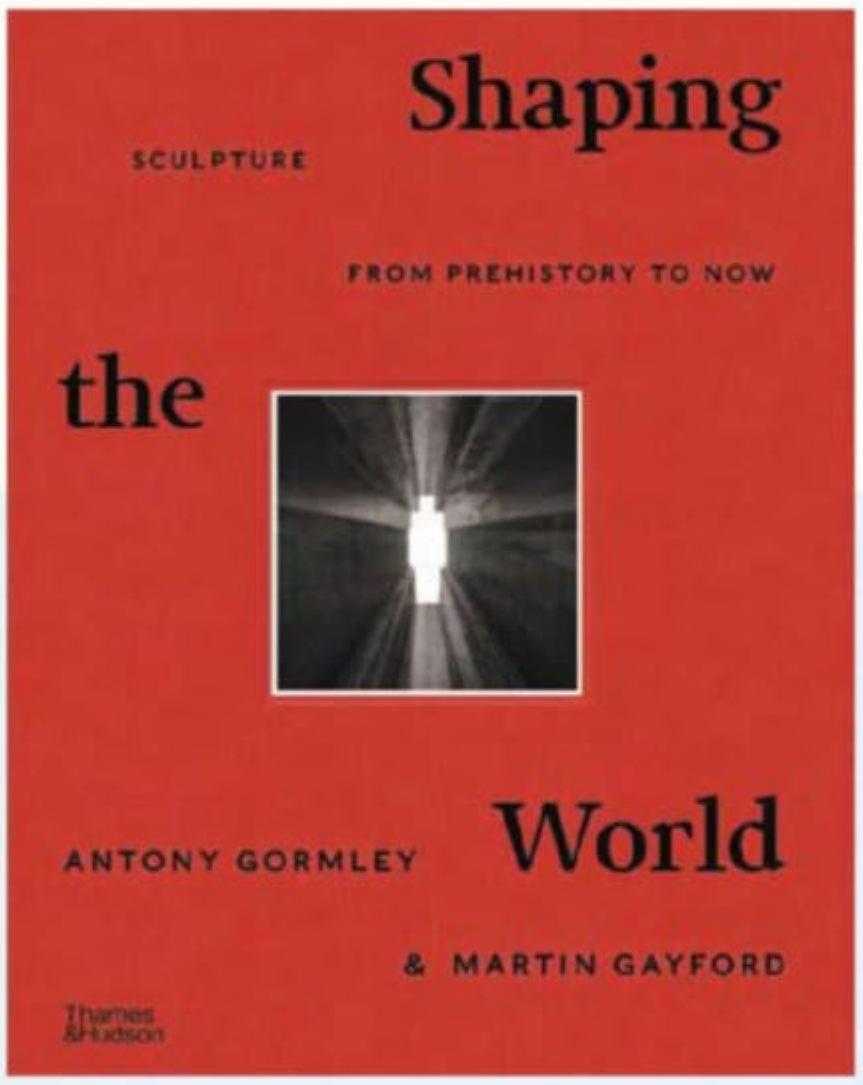


IMAGE: © Museo Nacional del Prado

BOOK REVIEWS



SHAPING THE WORLD: SCULPTURE FROM PREHISTORY TO NOW

Antony Gormley and Martin Gayford
THAMES & HUDSON, £40
HARDBACK
ISBN 978-0500022672

The sculptor Antony Gormley and the art historian and critic Martin Gayford have been talking about sculpture with each other for 20 years. Now those two decades of friendship have resulted in a fascinating new book, *Shaping the World: sculpture from prehistory to now*, in which their conversations are reproduced for others to enjoy.

The book's subtitle suggests that this is an exhaustive and all-encompassing history of the artform. But that is not entirely the case. Though a staggering amount of ground is covered in the volume's 400 or so handsomely illustrated pages, it is arranged neither chronologically nor geographically, there is no grand debate about art historical styles or subjects, and the term 'sculpture' is used in its broadest sense.

It is the book's main title, *Shaping the World*, that gives a better clue to its contents – with loose, thematic chapter headings (such as 'Bodies in Space', 'Voids', 'Time & Mortality', and 'Actions & Events') providing starting points for free-form conversations that fizz with knowledge and eloquence.

Time and again, unexpected comparisons and connections are made, as the discussion jumps from the Standing Stones of Stenness (c.3000 BC) to a 2015 work by Richard Serra, or from a giant southern Indian statue that is covered in milk during an annual festival to the experience of watching a Holy Week procession in Spain, where 14th- and 15th-century sculptures are carried through the streets and thus 'reanimated'. A real excitement is generated as Gormley and Gayford bounce entertainingly from one idea to the next, and from one country, or continent, or century, to another.

As a maker himself, Gormley has an intimate knowledge of the methods and materials used since sculpture's earliest beginnings, which adds new understanding to one's appreciation of the forms discussed. An object such as the *c.*500,000-year-old hand axe found at Happisburgh in Norfolk is on one level simply a practical multi-purpose tool – used for cutting, scraping, tearing – but in its symmetry and in the forms of its crafting it is also beautiful.

Relatively soon, we see humans using sculpture as a way to understand their place in the world, or even to imagine beings that do not truly exist, such as the shape-shifting Lion Man (c.40,000BC), found in a German cave in 1939. Leaping through time and space, the forms in the Grotte di Niaux in France are viewed in relation to the extraordinary clay and wax figures produced by the Italian sculptor Medardo Rosso (1858-1928).

At one point, Gayford – an expert on Michelangelo – recalls how the artist would spend months at quarries carefully choosing the blocks of marble he would use and 'capturing' forms in a sketchbook as the material came out of the earth. It is a fascinating vignette that leads to an equally enlightening discussion about how Michelangelo managed to create not just a beautiful representation of human form, helped by his study of ancient works such as the Belvedere Torso, but also access deep feelings and complex human emotion.

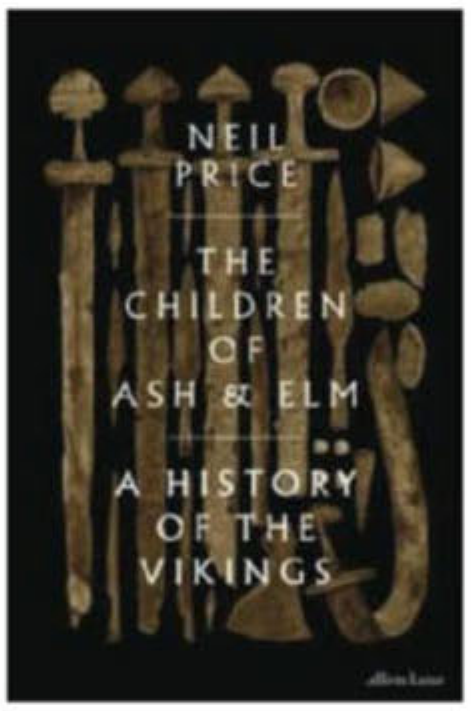
With so much in it, it is hard to do the book justice – and, with wonderful large illustrations of all the works discussed, it is, of course, a visual treat. But it is the comprehensive yet unconventional way in which Gayford and Gormley shine new light on objects from prehistory to the early 21st century that make this volume so truly spectacular.

More than anything, *Shaping the World* is a guide to looking. The works under discussion are interpreted, sometimes set in context (and with substantial expertise and erudition), but what is unique is the way objects – some familiar, some less well known – are examined visually and intellectually. The great critic John Berger wrote that 'the relation between what we see and what we know is never settled', and that, perhaps, is what Gormley and Gayford are really talking about. It is a wonderful conversation – one that I am sure will spark a hundred others in the readers of this book.

Maria Earle

THE CHILDREN OF ASH AND ELM: A HISTORY OF THE VIKINGS

Neil Price
ALLEN LANE, £30
HARDBACK
ISBN 978-0241283981



There has been much debate about what to call the people of medieval Scandinavia now known widely as 'Vikings'. The term stems from the Old Norse *vikingr*, used to describe someone who went on seafaring expeditions, but this was not tied to identifying any particular cultural group, nor did it initially carry connotations of violence. No matter what we call them, they are familiar figures in the popular imagination, as raiders afforded fiery boat funerals, but how much do we really know about these Vikings, who lived centuries ago?

As Neil Price, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Uppsala in Sweden, shows in his substantial new history of the Vikings, the answer is rather a lot. Of course, there are still plenty of gaps in our knowledge, and some conclusions drawn from at times limited evidence cannot be certain. Yet Price uses the available body of evidence to present us with an impressively intimate portrait of the people of the Viking Age.

Combining archaeology and textual sources, *The Children of Ash and Elm* provides a thorough survey of virtually all things Viking. We learn, among other things, what people wore, what tools they used, where they slept, where they relieved themselves, and what they ate, where, and how. For instance, while long, pronged forks for meat were used for serving from large vessels, table forks for individuals were not known. Bioarchaeological evidence also offers insights: only 7% of males who reached adulthood were malnourished in childhood, whereas for females it was 37%, so seemingly boys were given preferential treatment when it came to diet. The book is as much about what people thought, felt, and believed as what they did, and delves into views towards subjects like spirituality and sexuality.

Elsewhere, the book gives an important account of slavery, citing poems that list the derogatory names given to enslaved people and archaeological evidence, such as collars and an engraved stone found in Scotland depicting armed raiders leading a captive on to a ship, all presenting stark testimony of the grim fate of many who encountered the Vikings.

Crucially, there is also thorough consideration of the origins of Viking expansion, when people set out over the sea in all directions. This stretches back long before the traditional starting point for the Viking Age: the raid of the monastery of Lindisfarne in northern England in AD 793. As Price stresses, understanding these origins and the years before 793 is essential to understanding what is conventionally defined as the Viking Age. Equally, there is much to explore beyond the traditional end of the Viking Age in 1066. And with Price's engaging and in-depth account, drawn from more than 30 years of research in the field, *The Children of Ash and Elm* is an excellent book with which to do both.

Lucia Marchini

ON SCREEN

THE SECRET HISTORY OF WRITING

Written and directed: David Sington
BBC FOUR TELEVISION SERIES

IMAGE: Metropolitan Museum of Art [CC0]

Writing is among the greatest inventions in human history, perhaps *the* greatest invention, since it made history possible. But its diverse development, global spread, and invisible operation do not naturally lend themselves to television. This intelligent, articulate, and visually imaginative three-part BBC documentary series about five millennia of writing – shortened into two parts for US transmission as *A to Z* in the PBS series *NOVA* – is therefore particularly welcome, and will probably be watched for many years. Its aim, mentioned at the outset, is 'to explore this transformative technology, the different scripts that can turn spoken language into visual form, the varying methods we have used to put words on a page, and the way that changing the way we write has changed the course of history.'

The idea grew from a long-standing friendship between David Sington, its writer and director, and Brody Neuenschwander, a leading calligrapher, who demonstrates his skill with ancient and modern scripts, pens, and materials such as papyrus, parchment, and paper. Neuenschwander inspired Sington with his insight that Latin alphabetic letter forms were ideally shaped for the movable metal type created by Johannes Gutenberg for printing, hence the growth of European literacy – unlike the signs of other featured scripts, such as Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese characters. Presenter Lydia Wilson, an academic with a background in medieval Arabic philosophy, has the winning ability to interview archaeologists, historians, philologists, and artists at their own level while rendering their views understandable and engaging for a general audience. (Regrettably, *NOVA* prefers an off-screen narrator.)

Distinguished interviewees include British Museum curator Irving Finkel, a lifelong scholar of Sumerian cuneiform. Sitting among the museum's 130,000 cuneiform tablets, and dissecting some of their signs, Finkel explains how the earliest writing emerged from the need felt by Mesopotamian city-states *c.*3300 BC to record accounts. He deadpans: 'Anybody who works for the Inland Revenue will be proud to feel that that was their striking contribution to the progress of mankind.' Finkel speculates that the vital rebus principle, using sounds of pictograms to express the sounds of an unrelated, non-pictographic word – such as a camp with tents and a bell for the name 'Campbell' – could have occurred to human groups anywhere in the world, even an imaginative child. Hence, the probable multiple origins of writing, rather than a single origin in Mesopotamia or Egypt, as once favoured by scholars.

Ranging from ancient handwriting to modern Chinese text messages written in phonetically based Pinyin ('spell-sound'), rather than the conventional Chinese characters originating in Shang dynasty oracle bones *c.*1200 BC, the series ultimately returns to pictography, such as emojis. Could the internet eventually lead to the kind of 'universal' writing system, independent of particular languages, dreamt of by the 17th-century polymath Gottfried Leibniz? Unlikely, in my view, but if it were to do so, Wilson warns that 'a world of perfect communication is also a world of cultural uniformity'.

Andrew Robinson

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CLASSICAL CONUNDRUMS

Adam Jacot de Boinod is the author of *The Meaning of Tingo and Other Extraordinary Words* (published by Penguin Books). Below, he poses a vocabulary quiz from Latin and Ancient Greek.

Can you guess the correct definition from the following three options for:

(1) enamillos (Ancient Greek)
(a) being past one's prime
(b) engaged in equal contest with, a match for
(c) impulsively; without deliberation

(2) denus (Latin)
(a) the tenth
(b) a severe critic of playwrights
(c) to have been abandoned by one's mistress or lover

(3) euchimaros (Ancient Greek)
(a) with beautiful hips
(b) adept at engaging in polite behaviour
(c) rich in goats

(4) inlimis (Latin)
(a) one whose hair has never been cut
(b) having a very flat, snub nose
(c) without mud

(5) orpekas (Homeric Greek)
(a) diligently, actively, zealously
(b) saplings, shoots
(c) a lash or whip

(6) lolligo (Latin)
(a) a cuttlefish
(b) to use the rhetorical device of damning by faint praise
(c) to poke around with one's nose, as dogs do

(7) koilopedos (Ancient Greek)
(a) foppish, conceited
(b) secret; shady
(c) lying in a hollow

(8) indipiscor (Latin)
(a) to obtain, attain, reach
(b) an old man given to telling anecdotes
(c) a diver

(9) lechrios (Ancient Greek)
(a) of a pale green passing into greyish blue
(b) slanting crosswise, oblique
(c) wise in one's own conceit

(10) epulum (Latin)
(a) a song sung in turn by the guests at a banquet
(b) a sumptious meal, a banquet
(c) a deep pit into which condemned criminals were thrown to die

(11) orchatos (Homeric Greek)
(a) by chance, at random
(b) anything badly formed or out of shape
(c) an orchard, trees planted in a row

(12) fremor (Latin)
(a) a low roaring, a rushing, a murmuring
(b) a poet composing for someone's birthday
(c) the socket of a precious stone, an ornament, jewel

ANSWERS

1(b) engaged in equal contest with, a match for. 2(a) the tenth. 3(c) rich in goats. 4(c) without mud. 5(b) saplings, shoots. 6(a) a cuttlefish. 7(c) lying in a hollow. 8(a) to obtain, attain, reach. 9(b) slanting crosswise, oblique. 10(b) a sumptious meal, a banquet. 11(c) an orchard, trees planted in a row. 12(a) a low roaring, a rushing, a murmuring.

MINERVA

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

MARCH/APRIL 2021

STABIAE:
ROMAN LIFE IN THE SHADOW OF VESUVIUS

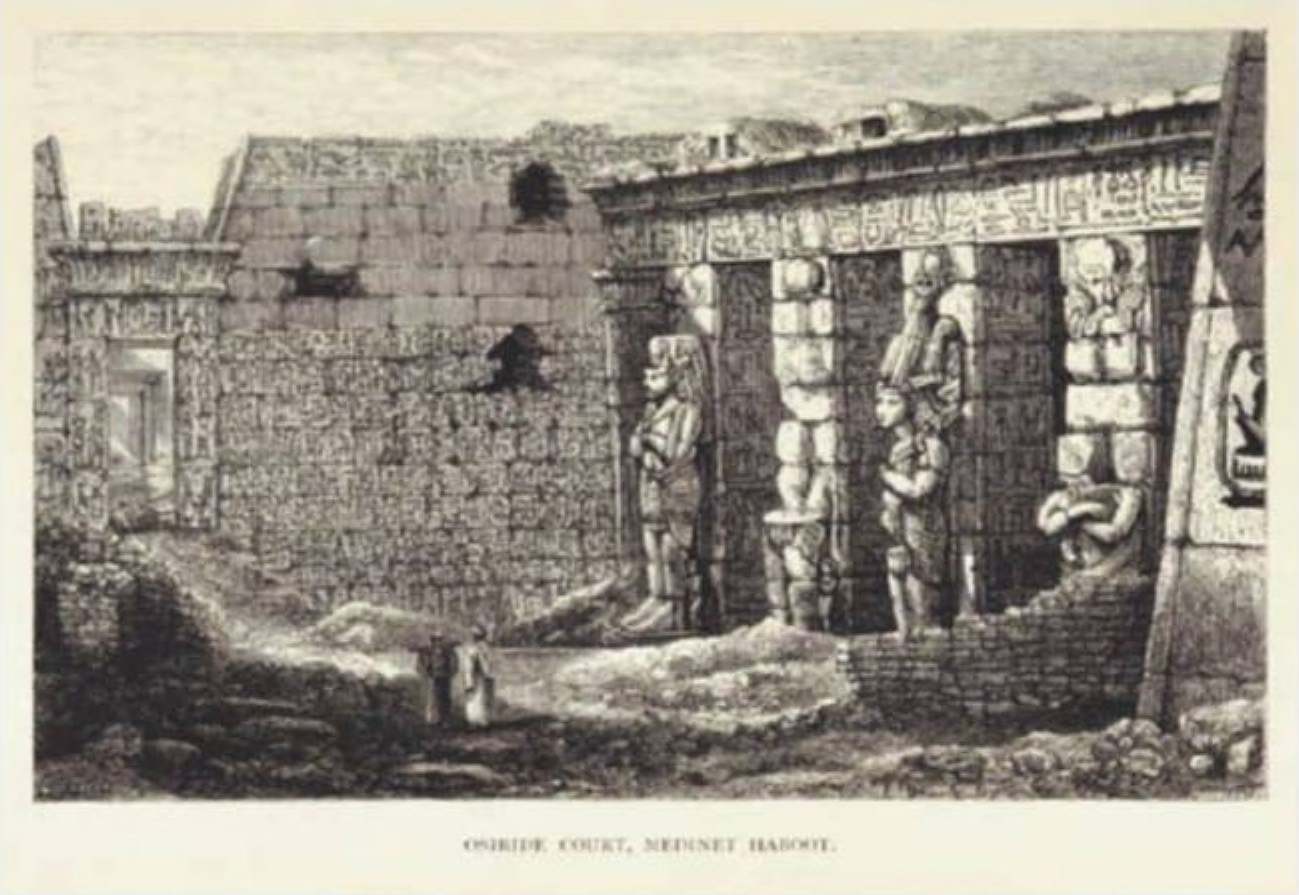
CLIFF-EDGE CONSERVATION:
INSIDE ETHIOPIA'S PAINTED ROCK-HEWN CHURCHES

ALL THAT GLITTERS:
THE POWER OF SHININESS IN PRE-COLUMBIAN AMERICA

Amelia Edwards

(1831-1892)

ABOVE Amelia Edwards, photographed for her lecture tour of the United States in 1890.
BELOW One of the illustrations from the second (1889) edition of *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, showing the Osiride Court at the mortuary temple of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu.


OSIRIDE COURT, MEDINET HABOOT.

With exquisite modesty, Amelia Edwards wrote in 1891 in *The Arena* magazine: 'I am essentially a worker, and a hard worker, and this I have been since my early girlhood.' 'Hard worker' she indubitably was – in 1882, she contributed more than 100 articles to just *The Academy* magazine, and in a single year wrote 4,000 archaeological fundraising letters – but with 'essentially' we must quibble. This major figure in Egyptian archaeology was also a novelist, journalist, artist, erstwhile musician, and dauntless travel writer.

Born in Islington, north London, she was already published by the age of 14, but pursued a musical career – until a bout of typhus made singing opera difficult. Edwards then made her living as a journalist and writer of fiction, publishing a dozen novels and numerous ghost stories. An adventurous spirit, she explored the largely uncharted Dolomite mountains in the 1870s with her friend Lucy Renshawe, a journey written up as the enduringly popular *Untrodden Peaks and Unfrequented Valleys*. Atrocious rain then dissuaded them from making a follow-up journey in France. In search of warmer weather, they decided instead to hire a *dahabiyah* to sail the Nile, finding an unknown temple in Abu Simbel. Egypt had Edwards hooked.

She poured her energy into research, wrote the bestselling book *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile* (1876), and, heartbroken by the thefts and heedless vandalism she had witnessed, battled to protect Egypt's extraordinary heritage. The Egypt Exploration Fund (now the Egypt Exploration Society) was duly founded in 1882, with the young Flinders Petrie becoming its archaeologist. Edwards went on to fund Britain's first professorship in Egyptology – carefully fitted up for Petrie, it was endowed at University College London, due to the institution's progressive attitude to women – as well as a scholarship for Francis Llewellyn Griffith, who decades later became the first Oxford Professor of Egyptology.

As a young bohemian, Edwards had dressed in male clothing and, after her 'unsuitable' engagement collapsed in 1852, never married. But she had devoted female companions, living with Ellen Braysher for nearly three decades. Braysher predeceased Edwards by a few months, and they are touchingly commemorated – together with Braysher's daughter from her earlier marriage – on the same gravestone.

Edwards 'did not love many people for all her seeming geniality', Griffith's wife once told the handsome Petrie, but he was among the three people of whom she was most fond. As fond, Edwards responded, as she might be of 'a young obelisk'. Given the affection she felt for her many artefacts (now in the Petrie Museum), this may be taken as some manner of compliment.

> "I am essentially a worker, and a hard worker, and this I have been since my early girlhood."

TEXT: Simon Coppock **IMAGES:** Science History Images/Alamy Stock Photo; Flickr/British Library [CC0]

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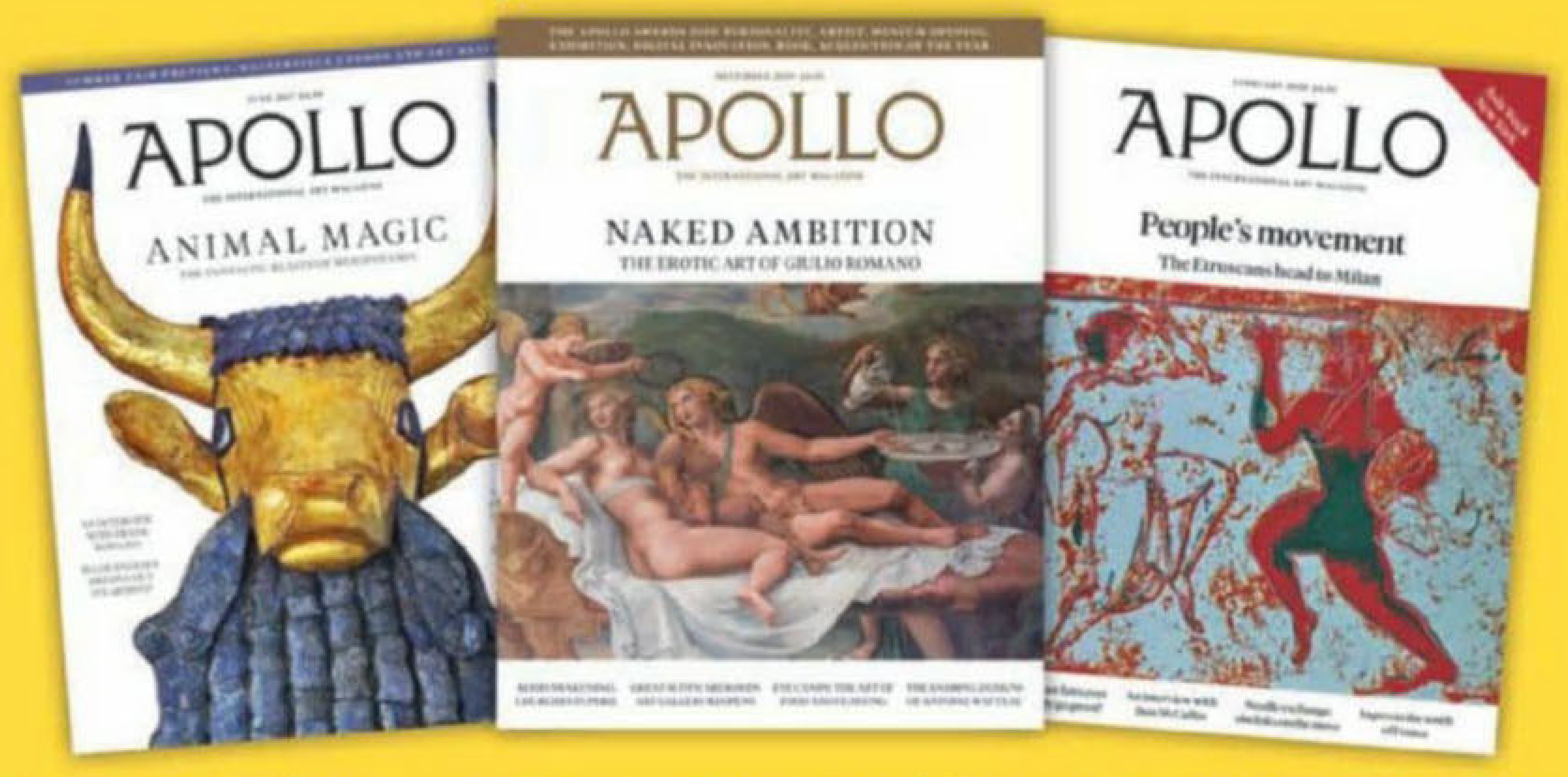
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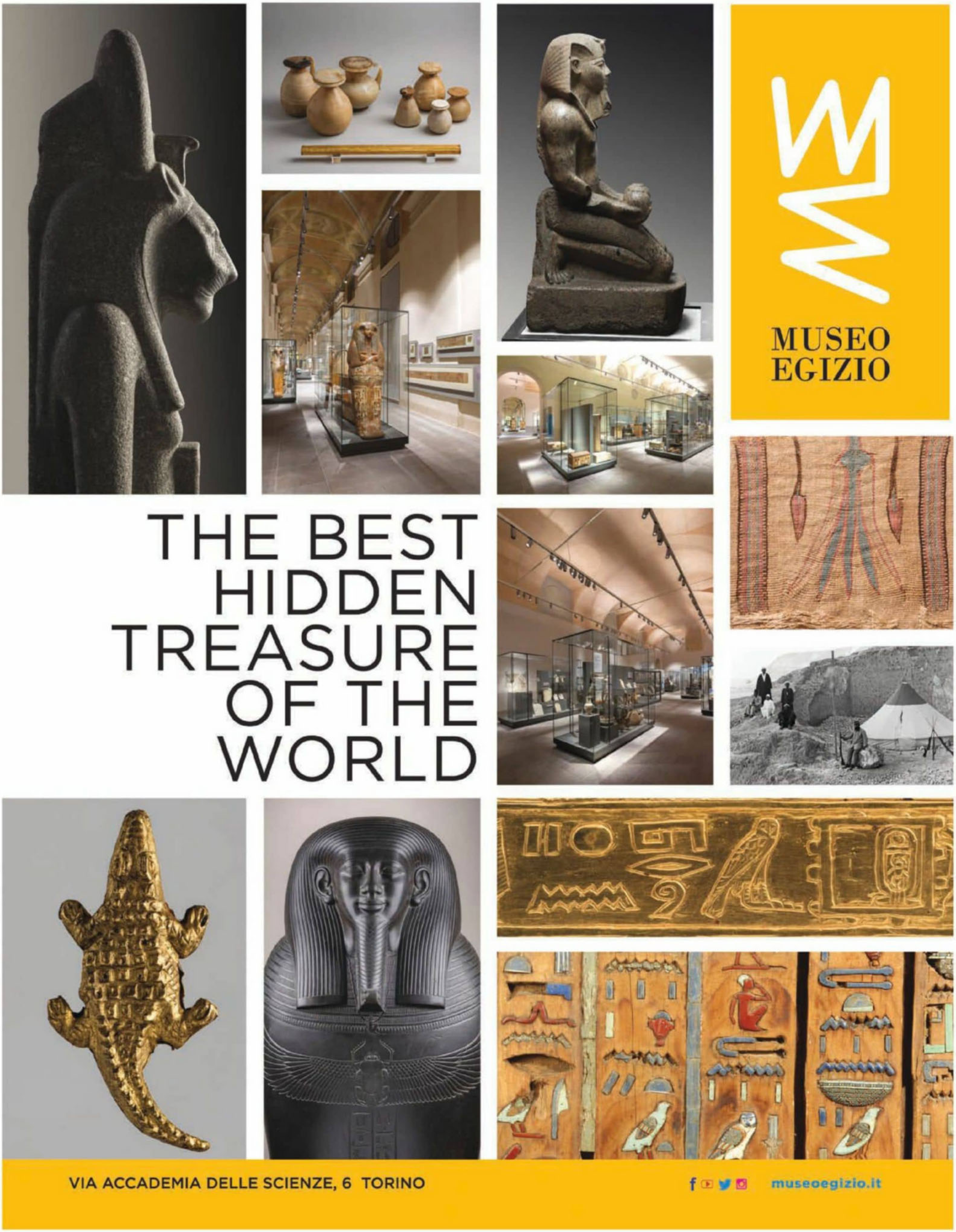

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